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The Relic Lays

**A Study of the Development of Late Middle Gaelic
*Fianaigheacht***

Joseph James FitzGerald Flahive

**Thesis for the Degree of Ph.D.
The University of Edinburgh
A.D. MMIV**



Multaque prærerea sacris in postibus arma,
captivi pendent currus curvæque secures
et cristæ capitum et portarum ingentia claustra
spiculaque clipei que erepta que rostra carinis.
Ipse Quirinali lituo parvaque sedebat
succinctus trabea lævaque ancile gerebat.

Æneid VII, ll. 182-8

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Abstract of Thesis

Joseph James FitzGerald Flahive

Ph. D. Thesis, The University of Edinburgh, A.D. 2004

The Relic Lays :

A Study of the Development of Late Middle Gaelic Fianaigheacht

The subject of this thesis is an analysis of a group of Fenian lays which are concerned with specific *reliquia* of the Fenians explained to St. Patrick, for which reason they are named 'relic lays' in this study. The most significant of these lays are 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga', 'Laoidh Scéith Finn,' 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair,' and 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' from Duanaire Finn ; and the tradition of *Bratacha na Féine*. It is significant that these texts all shew both signs of learned rather than popular composition and of greater linguistic antiquity than most other lays. The greatest body of these lays is to be found in Duanaire Finn. This study has been approached in two parts. The first part is an analysis of the development of *fianaigheacht* and the finding of the place of these texts within the Fenian corpus and also the wider literary tradition. The second part consists of new editions of the texts.

The first part begins with an history of the *fianaigheacht* and scholarship of it. The scholarship is crucial to the interpretation of the texts. Duanaire Finn (and perhaps RIA 24 P 5) are manuscripts with antiquarian tendencies influenced by the type of history promoted in Tridentine ideology as evidenced by Keating, the Four Masters (as collectors of ancient texts and as writers), and other authors of the period of the Stripping of the Altars. The nineteenth century saw the importation of the seventeenth-century views into scholarship by O'Curry and others; the scholarly approaches to *fianaigheacht* have tended until recently to uphold or attack ideological concepts of history and not to focus on the contents of the literature. The study then progresses to analysis of the texts themselves.

The analysis begins with an investigation of the language and the metre of the lays named above. The dates given to them by Prof. Murphy are reanalysed with reference to Dr. John Carey's evaluation of Murphy's method. Second, the group of lays is then evaluated as a sub-genre, comparing it to other literature, including the treatment of relics of the saints in Gaelic literature, texts relating to Fintan, *The Irish Ordeals*, 'Siaburcharpat Con Culainn,' earlier learned verse, and the later bardic tradition. The third part of the analysis is a discussion of the learned references in the poems. The approach to the analysis is a discussion of the symbolism of the objects around which the poems are centred and also of the learned references scattered throughout the texts, whether they be lists of Fenian lore, other native traditions, Christian learning, or Classical allusions. It is the conclusion of this section that these lays date from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries and arise in a learned context, probably in the reformed monastic communities of the northeast of Ireland.

The second part of this thesis contains new editions of the texts described in the first part. These are preceded by introductory materials on the manuscripts in which they are found and a stemma of the five copies in two recensions of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti.' All texts are presented as unaltered transcripts, as normalised texts, and in English translation. The texts edited from Duanaire Finn are 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga,' 'Laoidh Scéith Finn,' 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair,' and 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti.' A new edition of the recension of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' based on RIA manuscript 24 P 5 is also attempted with reference the later MSS of that textual tradition, which, it is argued, stand independent of 24 P 5. These manuscripts are Maynooth Renahan 69, RIA 24 M 2 and 23 L 34. A translation of the prose tale of that lay found in the unique *Agallamh* in 24 P 5 is provided for comparison. Each edition is followed by a commentary on its linguistic forms and a philological summary. The section concludes with indices *nominum et locorum* not only listing all persons and places in the texts, but also providing such information as is known about them from other texts or from interpretation of the names themselves.

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The Presentation of Gaelic and some Notes on Terminology

All Gaelic words used in the body of this thesis will be standardised to the common Classical language. It is the view of the author that not only confusion, but a sense of undue national partiality also, would be more likely the result of modernisation of the Gaelic words to either current Scottish usage or the Irish *caighdeán*, both of which are not only alien to the texts analysed, but unnatural to either one portion of his readership or the other. The texts which are being edited or discussed are from both Ireland and Scotland and share in versions of the standardised literary language of Classical Gaelic. Many or most of the terms which are employed in the body text are found within the lays themselves, where they are presented in Classical dress. Furthermore, the terms of literary criticism are to be found in the bardic tracts, which are cited in the editions. It appears senseless to place words in multiple period forms and orthographies, as it is more likely to be a confusion than an aid to anyone. The proliferation of multiple systems of spelling within a work seems to the author to cause more problems than would the simple extension of the older system held in common between the nations ; he has thus used in the body of this study Classical forms with their spelling standardised to Dinneen's lexicon (or to its standards with historicising corrections if a word be not found therein) universally in this work, except where a term is Old Gaelic, where *DIL* is used as the standard. In the case of multiple modern declensional forms, the author has given preference to those in the *Irish Grammatical Tracts*. It should also be noted that the forms of *fian* and its derivatives, such as *fianaigheacht*, have been spelt throughout this study with single *n*, which is historically correct and is the Early Modern usage in the lays edited here (often fixed by rhyme). Dinneen took the more recent double-*n* forms in common use as standard, and relegated the older ones to a note at the end of each entry. The preference of *fian* is thus a minor exception to the rule above, but it avoids the distraction which would result from the use of both forms.

Of course, quotations of texts from manuscripts or textual editions have been presented unaltered. Similarly, Gaelic terms (whether in Scottish, Irish, ancient, or modern dress) cited in the works of scholars writing in English, new Irish, French, German, etc., have not been altered. The names of texts have not been modernised. All Gaelic literature quoted is given in the orthography of the source. Gaelic forms of proper names that occur in the texts are used throughout for such names as have Gaelic origins, (i.e. are not merely adapted from Latin), including in discussion in English and translations of texts. Anglicisations of proper names,

should they be sought, are listed in the indices in part II.

In English the literary cycle is described as both 'Fenian' and 'Ossianic' ; both are modern terms of English language coinage, and neither has a claim of greater accuracy. In general, 'Fenian' is broader, whereas 'Ossianic' implies those works narrated by Oisín, but both have other overtones which sometimes suggest one or the other as more appropriate for a given phrase.

I : Purpose

Among the anecdotes of the Celtic discipline – although it may well be apocryphal – it is said that a student once asked Professor James Carney, if all the books of Irish scholarship were to perish save one, and he had the choice of which to save, which work would he rescue? Professor Carney responded that he would choose Professor Murphy's commentaries in the third volume of *Duanaire Finn*. The praise is immense, because Carney and Murphy stood on opposite sides of many of the debates that divided and divide the Celtic discipline. It has been fifty years since Murphy's volume was published, and upwards of seventy since much of it was written. Since then, the general response to an acknowledged masterwork has been that *Duanaire Finn* 'has been done,' and that all one needs to do is to reach for a copy from the long green series of the Irish Texts Society. Until recently, little further scholarship has been done on the Fenian cycle at all.

The problem with the pioneering editions of and commentaries on Gaelic literature is that the technical problems stood in the foreground, and once the texts were understood, they were used in philological, historical, and anthropological arguments ; any sense of literature faded nearly to the point of afterthought. R. Mark Scowcroft's review of Professor Nagy's study *The Wisdom of the Outlaw* opens with a concise and precise statement of this general problem :

It is remarkable that a literature so extensive, so rich, and so unusual as the medieval Irish should remain to such a great extent outside the purview of literary study. Most commentaries, in fact, concern something else – pagan beliefs, history (or prehistory), what Eugene O'Curry called 'manners and customs' – for which the literature is treated as a source. As such, it must inevitably strike its students as inadequate : a dim, confused reminiscence of whatever interests them. Analytical techniques borrowed from comparative philology are invoked to show that the authors did not know what they were doing, and that a reconstructed 'tradition' contradicts them at every turn. The individual text is so rarely examined as a coherent work of art, or the (extant) tradition as a province of the literary world, that medievalists, devoting such energy and skill to the fragments surviving from other early vernaculars, have more or less ignored the vast resources of this one.¹

It is a literary analysis of texts, a selection of Fenian lays, which is here undertaken. Before proceeding further, the word 'lay' should be defined more precisely. In this study, 'lay' shall be an equivalent of the Gaelic *laoidh* and narrowed in meaning to a technical sense in which it shall denote a narrative poem of sufficient length to tell an episode or episodes within a

¹ R. Mark Scowcroft, 'On the Liminality of the Fenian Cycle,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XIII (Summer 1987), p. 97.

larger subject-matter. Such poems generally take preëxisting characters and situations ; they develop a portion of a larger narrative framework. Because the full context of the narration is not contained within the text, such works fall short of the category of epic, although it may, of course, be argued that a congeries of interrelated lays as a corpus can form an epic cycle. Most Gaelic lays of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period are episodes within either the Fenian or the Ulster Cycles. In Gaelic, the technical and usual designation in the Classical period for such a composition is *laoidh*, but there are any number of less precise terms commonly used for them.² The English term 'ballad' also appears in scholarship in reference to these texts. It is a less satisfactory designation for general use in this study because it evokes its popular English usage as a term for a song of love rather than a narrative.

This study has selected a group of *laoithe fianaigheachta* from the lays in *Duanaire Finn* which bear signs of pre-thirteenth-century composition and which focus on learned lore. A significant core of these early lays (as opposed to the earlier lyric pieces that are so large a portion of the earliest Fenian verse) focus upon the history of an object, as narrated by Oisín or Caoilte to S. Patrick. Such poems are classified as 'relic lays' for the purposes of this study. These lays are reëdited here from the MS with linguistic reëvaluation and subjected to a literary analysis of their form as conveyers of learned Ossianic lore, including the sources of learned references used in their composition. From this group of texts in *Duanaire Finn*, the subject will be extended to such other texts of the rare subgenre of the relic lays as may be found elsewhere. It will be attempted then to ascertain how these lays fit into the wider tradition of the *fianaigheacht* and beyond, in the wider realm of the mediæval learned tradition, in which context they have received only passing consideration hitherto.

The editors of *Duanaire Finn* prepared an edition with very different concerns to those of modern scholarship. At the opening of the twentieth century, there were still some who sang the lays in Ireland as well as in Scotland (where a few still do), and popular editions of many texts circulated widely, usually in publications that, although undertaken in a quasi-scholarly manner, were undermined rapidly by the introduction of academic philology to the study of the Gaelic language.³ *Duanaire Finn* proved a great treasure. It was virtually unknown until it arrived in Dublin, and provided a glimpse back two hundred years beyond the amateur collections of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Prof. Mac Neill began his

² In the modern period, general terms for songs or poems such as *dán*, *duan*, *amhrán* (Scots Gaelic *òran*) have been widely, though imprecisely, used to denote such compositions.

³ Cf. chapter III (c), especially n. 55.

work in the company of the scholar-revolutionaries of the Gaelic revival ; his introduction, containing a fascinating though fatally flawed theory of Irish history, used the literature as a political tool.⁴ When Murphy undertook to continue the work, the battles over the nature of the old *scéalta* were beginning. The second half of *Duanaire Finn* was used as an antiëuhemerist weapon to the extent of *reductio ad mythologium* ; Murphy's theory is discussed at length in chapter III (d) below. The sheer scale and comprehensiveness of the three volumes, despite the internal disagreements of the editors or their axes to grind, ensured that they were considered definitive and complete until very recently.

For all that has been written about *Duanaire Finn*, little has been said about the content of the individual lays. The learned focus of the older lays in general, and these in particular, is remarkable. The Fenian cycle developed into the great popular cycle of Gaelic literature, and its learning is often downplayed in scholarship, which tends to compare it unfavorably in this regard with the Ulster Cycle. Mac Neill never finished the edition himself, and never was able to present his own analysis of the poems as literature, which he intended to do. Murphy did not take the poems of *Duanaire Finn*, or indeed the Fenian Cycle as a whole, seriously from a literary perspective. He dismissed them as simple folk compositions.⁵ As will be demonstrated in the chapters hereafter, such views are untenable.

Although there is a strong popular element in the cycle from the beginning, which becomes much more pronounced as the cycle evolves, the lays which are considered here are literary compositions with clear learned references, not only to Irish history and the other cycles of Gaelic literature, but also to the wider world of European learning. It will be demonstrated that these texts have connexions to the tradition of *dinnsheanchas*, learned genealogy, the compilation of synthetic (pseudo)history, and learned legal material. Such concerns can be summarised in the term 'learned lore,' with the understanding that in this context it denotes nothing less than items of particular interest and concern — often due to their antiquity or obscurity, to the educated élites at the time of their composition. The term thus stands parallel in its intention to the description of so much of the mediæval prose cycles as 'learned tales' by Prof. Mac Cana.⁶

⁴ *DF* I, pp. xxiv-lxx.

⁵ *DF* III, pp. civ-cvii.

⁶ Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Mediæval Ireland* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), *passim*.

Furthermore, it is notable that such texts are richly composed and precisely written. Although, as a genre, they do not employ the highest registers of the language, they do present a procession of tradition, learning, and narrative, woven together with great literary skill into original and unique texts ; they are a world away from the corpus of early modern material which Professor Meek characterises as 'a fashionable wave of texts, with simple plots and little learning' and 'single-plot verse.'⁷

Selection of Texts

This study has selected a group of lays for their thematic links for more detailed analysis. They are linked in two ways. First, these are lays to which Murphy assigned a date in the twelfth or early thirteenth century, placing them as a significant portion of the group of lays of notable linguistic age or conservatism in the MS. Second, all of them focus on objects in whose history they are interested. These lays are (as denoted by the objects of their concern by the present author and their numbering in the older edition) 'Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga' (VIII), 'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn' (XVI) 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' (XVII), 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair' (XX), and 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' (XLVII). Such relic lays are uncommon in the tradition ; none are found in the list of earliest *fianaigheacht* items by Meyer and Murphy.⁸ This form is also notably nonproductive in the later tradition, which focuses on other models, usually simple narrative plots or elegies.⁹ The general trend is that whereas early lays appear to contain lore such as genealogies or *dinnsheanchas*, later lays are more straightforwardly heroic narratives, focusing the plot upon the chase, encounters with invaders, or the *daoine sídhe*. Narration of the tale in verse thus replaces the learned lore that is the justification for the earlier lays.

Proceeding from Duanaire Finn, the *Agallamh* of 24 P 5 is the primary other MS which shares slightly in this taste for lays of object-lore, with a different recension of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' and a lay with connexions to that of the 'Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga.' One also finds the theme of the *Bratacha na Féine*, concerning which there are a set of quatrains that are the centrepiece of the eponymous lay, and which are also found often interpolated into other lays.

⁷ Donald Meek, 'Duanaire Finn and Gaelic Scotland,' *Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 33, 37 ; and similar phrases passim throughout his published works.

⁸ Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigecht* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910), pp. xvi-xxxi ; Gerard Murphy, review of the forementioned, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* VIII (1912), p. 599.

⁹ Cf. chapter II below.

The 'Ballad of the Mantle' (*DF* lay LXV, also common in other MSS) and 'The Bird-Crib' (XLI) also have some relation to the learned template of the lays listed above, although they do not participate fully in the type. No other Fenian lays of this type are to be found in any period, although there are plenty of parallels in the literature beyond the *fianaigheacht*, especially the 'Colloquy of Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' 'Siaburcharpat Con Culainn,' Giolla in Chomded ua Cormaic's poem 'A Rí réidig dam...', and 'The Irish Ordeals,' which will be discussed in chapter V as possible models for the lays.

The remainder of this study will reexamine these texts closely. New editions of the relic lays are provided in Part II, with the intent of overcoming some of the difficulties that the older editions present. In *Duanaire Finn*, one could not read what was in the MS and what was expansion or even emendation because the typeface of the first volume was in a font lacking italics, and the expansions of the second volume were undertaken in a manner inconsistent with the orthography of the MS. The poem 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' from 24 P 5 has also been reedited, not only for easier comparison to the recension of that poem in *Duanaire Finn*, but because later MSS, unexamined by scholarship hitherto, which derive from an independent witness to the exemplar of 24 P 5, allow for analyses of that recension not possible from the old diplomatic edition of the text.¹⁰ New editions can also employ the advances in lexicography and philology of the last century since Mac Neill began the first volume of *Duanaire Finn* and are thus better able to support further enquiries into the transmission, register, and age of the texts.

The chapters which follow in the present part of this study are an attempt at the analysis of these texts both as literature in themselves, and in their place within the context of the tradition of the *fianaigheacht* and of the Gaelic literary tradition. The most fundamental point for any analysis is to establish, insofar as is possible, the same points wherewith textual analysis has begun since ancient times : the *auctor*, *locus*, *tempus*, and *causa scribendi* of the texts. Apart from Prof. Murphy's dates for the texts, which need to be reviewed, no serious effort has been expended on these basic points yet. The next chapter attempts to summarise the development of the literature of the *fianaigheacht*. It seeks to find a location in that tradition where, from the information gathered from the existing scholarship on the cycle, there is a high antecedent probability that poems considered in this study will fit. The third chapter of the analysis explores two other relevant intellectual contexts of the texts in the processes of

¹⁰ Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, ed. *Agallamh na Seanórach*, 3 vols. (Baile Átha Cliath : Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1942-5).

transmission and of editing. The first of these is the writing of the MSS of the works in this study in the context of the Gaelic intellectual response with Tridentine ideological purposes to the Stripping of the Altars. The second context is to trace the use of Fenian and other heroic texts in the opinions of the scholars who have analysed and edited the lays, looking at their reaction to a revival of those seventeenth century views about the nature of the Fenian texts by nineteenth century scholars in particular. The nineteenth century thesis is the euhemerising view of scholars like O'Curry, which eclipsed the earlier views of more amateur antiquarian speculation. Nevertheless, O'Curry and his contemporaries, having found the works of seventeenth-century scholarship that appeared to confirm what they wished to believe, accepted unquestioningly the seventeenth century synthesis. Their view found its Hegelian antithesis in mythologisation to the exclusion of virtually everything else by scholars such as O'Rahilly and Murphy a generation later.

After exploration of the history of the texts and contexts, a new evaluation of the linguistic age of the texts is undertaken in order to find their place in the literary tradition more precisely. Special attention is given to the register usually employed in the genre of the lays, which has caused difficulties in dating the age of the texts. Full discription of the metres of the poems are also given.

The remainder of the lays are then analysed afresh, both as individual texts and as a body of thematically related material.¹¹ The final conclusion is intended to bring together the background from the first half with the textual analyses of the second, in order to draw such conclusions as may be made about the nature of this unique group of texts. It is the hope of the author that this study will prove not only that this corpus of relic lays are a significant learned body of expertly crafted texts which display strong literary innovation, but that they also play a direct and crucial rôle in the direction of the evolution of the Fenian cycle itself.

¹¹ The form of this study is greatly influenced by the approach and structure of the studies of Fenian ballads in the doctoral theses of Prof. Donald Meek (Glasgow, 1982) and Dr. Anja Gunderloch (Edinburgh, 1997).

II : *An Fhianaigheacht*

This chapter and the following are sketches done with a broad brush. They are intended to place the subjects of this study, the texts and the MSS in which they are contained, in a historical perspective. It is desired furthermore to place this study itself in the perspective of the scholarly ground which has already been covered, that this study itself may illuminate some certain points further. It is hoped to accomplish this much here : a comprehensive treatment of such a broad subject as the history of the *fianaigheacht* is certainly beyond the scope of a thesis, as it would be indeed of even a much broader enquiry. The discussion of scholarly opinions of Fenian material in this chapter is synchronical in the interest of brevity, mentioning only opinions that are still active in scholarship to-day ; this chapter is primarily concerned with placing the texts themselves within their context in the cycle and in Gaelic literature. A discussion of the context of the actual MS sources and of historical evolution of the scholarship of the Fenian cycle will be undertaken in the next chapter.

(a) Roots of the Cycle

The earliest texts of the Fenian cycle to survive do not provide special insight into the origins of the cycle, as they are too brief to provide the material without reference to later texts. It has rather been the work of scholars to find the roots. To-day, there is only one explanation with scholarly credibility, although various other hypotheses have held sway in the past. Such theories and their effects on the understanding of the texts at present is a topic large enough that it has been given the whole of the chapter following this one. Overall, there have been two movements. The character of Fionn and of many the central characters of the cycle such as Oisín and Goll mac Morna have been teased out of the synthetic pseudohistories and demonstrated to be euhemerised remnants from mythology. At the same time, scholars of the brehon laws and of ecclesiastical texts have noted that *fiana* are a real part of the history of the Gaedhil and are a phenomenon with strong Indo-European parallels to be seen elsewhere.

The idea that the character of Fionn was originally a deity, which is over a century old, has not been in the least controversial for a generation. The general outline of the modern consensus is based on the work of Murphy and O'Rahilly, and almost no new evidence has come to light in the last half a century. Prof. Mac Cana has moderated the position slightly, warning that O'Rahilly has a tendency to reduce deities to a simple opposition of the hero,

Lugh, and the otherworldly, the Daghdha, played out under other names.¹ Further refinements of the arguments have been made, especially by Dáithí Ó hÓgáin.² Fionn has no place in genealogy as an ancestor of real peoples, nor is his place in the pseudohistories consistent.³ Rather, Fionn has a strong claim to a divine origin. The name is 'White,' and has its own descent traceable to the edges of prehistory. In Welsh tradition, the name of Gwynn ap Nudd is immediately recognisable as cognate, with the minor variation that Fionn's ancestor Nuadhu is moved forward to be his father, but the connexion is reënforced, not weakened by the linking of the figures in a similar fashion. The ancient name **Vindos*, attested in place names, places Fionn among the ancient Celts as far as Vendresse, Windisch, and Vienna.⁴ In the direct pagan religious context, Vindonnus, a diminutive form, is an epithet of 'Apollo' in inscriptions from ancient Gaul.⁵ Early in the Gaelic tradition, there are suggestions of triplication, a common feature of Celtic deities : Find mac Cumail the seer, Find File the mythological poet-king of Leinster,⁶ and possibly Mórainn (i.e. Mór-Fhind) the lawgiver.⁷ All of the scholars cited in the summaries above also see overlappings, parallels, and duplications with the Lugh myth, which will be discussed in the following chapter (III), as it is a point concerning which there is still controversy. It is also worth pointing out a few common observations regarding other characters in the cycle. There are similarities between the Aodh (Goll) mac Morna, the 'one-eyed-fiery one' and Balor. Oisín has a name meaning 'fawn,' which in the context of the

¹ Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Fianaigecht in the Pre-Norman Period,' *Béaloideas* LIV-LV (1986-7) (& equivalent book, Bo Almqvist & al. edd., *Fiannaíocht* [Dublin : Folklore of Ireland Society, 1987]), pp. 79, 83-4.

² Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin : Gill & Macmillan, 1988), ch. I.

³ Cf. T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin : Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), pp. 275-81. It is also notable that it was possible period for the Campbells of Argyll to construct a Fenian genealogy at a very late period ; there were no other claims to contradict them, as no one else claimed a Fenian genealogy, cf. William Gillies, 'Heroes and Ancestors,' *Béaloideas* LIV-LV (1986-7), pp. 57-74.

⁴ Gerard Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin : Colm Ó Lochlainn, 1955), p. 8 ; *DF* III, p. lxxxiv.

⁵ E.g. items 5644-6 in Otto Hirschfeld & Carolus Zangemeister, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum XIII : Inscriptiones Trium Galliarum et Germanorum Latinae* (Berolini : Georgius Reinerus, 1905), p. 105.

⁶ Ó hÓgáin, op. cit, pp. 4, 6.

⁷ This explanation of the name, probably inaccurate due to confusion of vowel length, is found in the Irish Ordeals (Wh. Stokes, *Irische Texte* III : 1 [Leipzig : S. Herzl, 1891], § 12, p. 189 and 207). It is significant that the tale of the magical collars of Morainn and the other ordeals is the earliest text focused on objects and their powers in Gaelic. It also contains a decision by Fithiol over a case involving King Cormac, similar to that in CC. The comparison of the 'Irish Ordeals' with the form of the relic lays is undertaken in Chapter XI of this study.

fian (with its wolf-associations, as will be described below), has Cernunnos-type attributes, certainly of supernatural character, though a direct equation of these figures or link of direct derivation remains a step beyond what the evidence warrants.⁸ Diarmaid bears the name Ó Duibhne, derived from the name Dovia, the ancestor-goddess of the Corca Dhuibhne well attested in the genitive *Dovinas* on the Ogham stones of the Corcaguiny peninsula.⁹ Other characters in the cycle such as Aonghus, the otherworld lord of Newgrange ; Manannán ; and Goibhne (more modern *-nionn*), the smith retain strong supernatural characteristics. The legendary King Cormac is an important figure.¹⁰ This is not to say that every character of the cycle has a mythological figure lurking in the background behind him, but it is difficult to gainsay the evidence that most of the important ones do. Thus the character of Fionn and those of his fellows are of ancient roots and were formed at least in outline long before the formation of the literary cycle, even if the characters did see significant modification in the course of euhemerisation and historicisation over the course of the Middle Ages.

The institution of the *fian* has come forward from the mists of legend as far as Fionn and his men have retreated into them. A century ago, Kuno Meyer noted that *fiana* feature in the Irish legal texts. There they are part of the structure of society, and serve as the full-time protectors of the *tuath*, and thus have rights and a degree of legal license ; they are not considered outlaws. Meyer considered that the majority of them were 'men expelled from their clan (*éclaind*), or landless men (*dithir*), sons of kings who had quarreled with their fathers, men proclaimed, or men who seized this means to avenge some private wrong by taking the law into their own hands.'¹¹ Although he cites the *Tecosca Cormaic*, which he edited the

⁸ Cf. Prof. McCone's interpretation of the the Gundestrup cauldron panel whereupon a Cernunnos-figure is depicted separating the deer and the wolves and wields a torque ('Cúlra Ind-Eorpach na Féinne,' *An Fhiannaíocht: Leachtaí Choluim Chille XXV*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta [Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1995], p. 20.

⁹ Judith Cuppage & al., *Archaeological Survey of the Dingle Peninsula* (Ballyferriter : Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne, 1986), the name is preserved on ogham stones unambiguously and in full in items 268, 792.6, 799, 820.2, and 820.5.

¹⁰ Cormac mac Airt is unquestionably legendary ; whether he is also mythical is debatable yet. O'Rahilly is convinced that Cormac is a derivative of Lugh, with whom he also linked Fionn (op. cit., pp. 283-4). Tomás Ó Cathasaigh is more reserved in his judgment, noting that the heroic life that we have is an imposition, potentially applied to real or mythical figures (*The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt* [Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977], p. 101). There are mythical elements involved, especially the bear-son motif (Ibid., p. 47). Ó Cathasaigh's conclusion is to read Cormac as a personification of kingship, without ruling on the question of an historical or divine root of the figure (Ibid., pp. 104-6). It appears that there is some element of both, and that the question is now to ascertain which one is truer to the core of the figure.

¹¹ Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigecht* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910), pp. ix-x.

previous year (1909), as an authority for that statement, Meyer notably omitted the reference in that text where it is stated that *fénnid cách co trebad*, 'everyone is a *fénnid* until he takes up husbandry'.¹² This source of *féinidhe* from young men not yet come into their societal status is the point on which much later scholarship has focused. There is likely to have been an element of both within the historical phenomenon, with this last element of young *féinidhe* numerically dominating. Prof. McCone's analysis of the legal texts regarding those outwith membership of the *tuath* has led him to the conclusion that there is 'a social reality underlying these two types of Fenian warrior identified by Nagy, namely the young man for whom this was a passing phase and someone who spent all or most of his life as a *féindid*'.¹³

McCone's work casts further light onto this likely function of *fianaigheacht* as a stage in the life of a young man. The chief aim of McCone's paper 'Cúlra Ind-Eorpach na Féinne'¹⁴ is the historicisation of the *fian* as the Irish development of a wider Indo-Germanic phenomenon, the Germanic equivalent of which is the *Männerbund*, and which has numerous other parallels from the ancient Spartan coming of age to the Viking bands ; the hypothesis has been supported strongly by the correspondence of vocabulary across many languages which he has demonstrated. In the context of early Ireland, he has shewn that *fianaigheacht* had elite connotations ; the *féinidhe* were often described as the sons of kings in not only literature of the Ossianic cycle, which is favourable to the institution, but also in ecclesiastical texts. The evidence is that it was a place for the formation of rulers. As McCone summarises, there is a system of social age grading primarily at work :

'It thus appears that for many males of free birth in early Ireland the termination of fosterage around around fourteen years of age was followed by a stage in the *fian*, an independent organization of predominantly landless, unmarried, unsettled, and young men given to hunting, warfare, and sexual license in the wilds outside the *túath*, upon which it made claims, by agreement

¹² Kuno Meyer, ed. *The Instructions of King Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1909), p. 46 (§ 31.10).

¹³ Kim McCone, 'Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Díberga* and *Fíanna* : Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XII (Winter 1986), p. 11. The parallel institutions of other Indogermanic peoples are expounded in greater depth in 'Hund, Wolf und Krieger bei den Indogermanen,' *Studien zum indogermanischen Wortschatz*, ed. W. Meid (Innsbruck : Universität Innsbruck, 1987), pp. 101-54. The Comparisons with the Viking *berserkr* is focussed on pp. 102-3 and the Spartan institution of *krypteia* on p. 124-7. Roman parallels in pseudo-history and myth follow with emphasis on Romulus, pp. 127-131. Much of the remainder of the paper is used to outline the Dumézilian functions of the rôles described and to reconstruct the origins of these institutions. Further analysis of the points which follow in this section may also be found in McCone's book *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth : Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1990), passim & in particular chapter nine, p. 203 & ff.

¹⁴ McCone, 'Cúlra Ind-Eorpach,' p. 7.

or force as the case might be, to sustenance and hospitality and for which it might perform certain elementary police or military services where relations were not strained by hostility. Upon the acquisition of the requisite property, usually by inheritance on the death of the father or other next of kin but not before the age of twenty, one would normally pass from the *fían* to full membership of the *túath* of married property-owners.¹⁵

McCone also in the above passage makes the observation that there would be some who did not pass back into the *tuath*, and who remained lifelong *féinidh*. This group is the focus of Prof. Nagy's work *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*,¹⁶ which explores the significance of the figure of Fionn. For Nagy, Fionn, as a lifelong *féinidh*, and indeed part of a multi-generational line of them, Fionn (and by extension most of the important members of his *fian*) is a transitional figure, spending his life on the edge of society. The likelihood of such figures existing in the structure of real *fiana* is not unlikely, and for these more mature and experienced figures, an 'officer' rôle, like that attributed to Fionn in the literature, seems reasonable. It is unsurprising that this already exceptional rôle could be adapted for such an exceptional figure ; it is characterised by multiple types of liminalities.¹⁷

Undoubtedly in clerical eyes, juvenile *féinidhe* were the ones to be dissuaded most from undertaking *fianaigheacht* during the process of Christianisation. Richard Sharp has demonstrated the ecclesiastical attitude towards *fiana* in his work with hagiographical sources, in which terminology for warrior bands is common. He charts the evolution of Hiberno-Latin *laicus* and the loan word into Gaelic from it (*láech*), which cease to mean simply 'a layman,' and begin to mean 'a warrior' even in texts prior to the eighth century. Glosses on such texts are associated with the native Gaelic term *díberg* 'reaver' and its derivatives, which he notes is in that period 'limited to this ritualised brigandage involving a *uotum mali* and the wearing of *signa diabolica*.'¹⁸ It is in this context of the religious texts that condemn diabolical reaving that the term *fiana* makes its début, specifically in the slaying of Cais mac Glais by the *fiana* of

¹⁵ McCone, 'Juvenile Delinquency,' p. 13.

¹⁶ Joseph Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw* (London : University of California Press, 1985), pp. 20-1.

¹⁷ For an extended discussion of the liminality of Fionn, vid. Joseph Nagy, 'Heroic Destinies in the *Macgnímrada* of Fionn and Cú Chulainn,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 40 (1984), pp. 23-39. The point has been taken further in a review of *Wisdom of the Outlaw*, R. Mark Scowcroft, 'On liminality in the Fenian Cycle,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XIII (Summer 1987), especially p. 98, where he suggests the alternate subtitle 'Liminality in the Fenian Cycle.'

¹⁸ Richard Sharp, 'Hiberno-Latin Laicus and Irish Láech,' *Ériu* XXX (1979), p. 83, discussion of the characteristics of *díbergach*, pp. 82-4.

Mac Con in Tírechán's *Vita S. Patricii*. Sharp concludes that

There is nothing to distinguish them [i.e. *fiana*] from the *latrunculi* or *laici* already discussed, except that we do not hear of *fiana* wearing *signa diabolica* or the like. Such allusions may have been filtered out in the telling, for their composition and conduct are comparable...¹⁹

He continues by demonstrating that mediæval glossators did two things with these items of vocabulary : they sometimes equated *díbheargha* and *féinidhe* and other times gave the latter a more positive connotation. He takes this divergence to be a result of the literary action of the Fenian literary cycle on the use of the word at a time when the actual phenomenon had ceased, but it could also have been a point of connotation present earlier, as it is notable that *díbheargha* are more common than *fiana* in hagiography, which is uniformly unfavourable to them, whatever the term employed. (This may be simply an example of the universal fact that 'Our boys will be boys,' but yours are a delinquent bunch of yobs and a menace to society). McCone takes this second view : 'It thus appears that the abstract *fiannas* denoted *fian* activity in general, whereas *díberg* had a more specialized reference to a particularly nasty aspect of it that early churchmen were prone to emphasize in order to discredit the institution as a whole.'²⁰

Thus there are other words than *fian* for a band of warriors or marauders. Literary examples, which are common, of other *fiana* than that of Fionn need not be covered in depth here.²¹ Using the enlarged vocabulary Sharpe outlines, it is possible to find some further exempla in historical sources where undoubtedly real *fiana* are recorded. The killing of Cellach mac Coirpri by a brigand (*a latrone*) in the Annals of Ulster, 767.8, may be such a case. In another example from the Annals of Ulster, 847.3, there is a direct mention of *fiana*.²² There is a longer list of such mentions, even if later, in Meyer.²³ The middle of the tenth century is the last point at which there is annalistic evidence for real native *fiana*, although some of the vocabulary of *díbheargach* finds a new use in the description of Norse raids. It

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

²⁰ McCone, 'Juvenile Delinquency,' p. 6 ; cf. 'Hund Wolf und Krieger,' p. 105.

²¹ Cf. McCone, 'Culra Ind-Eorpach,' pp. 8-9.

²² Séan Mac Airt & Gearóid Mac Niocaill, edd., *Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* (Dublin : Institute of Advanced Studies, 1983), pp. 220-1 & 306-7.

²³ Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. xiii-xiv.

may be hypothesised that this shift in vocabulary during the Norse Wars is the result of the cessation of the native institution, likely due to the diversion of warriors through the creation of more organised armies in response to the threat.²⁴ A further hint of the decline of the practice of *fianaigheacht* can be found in the 'Immacallam in dá Thurad,' a text likely of the ninth century.²⁵ Therein, *cumsunnad fianasa* (§235) is listed in a list of evils of the last times which comprises §§175-266. It is in the earlier portion of the lists, which includes events such as Viking raids which were prior to or contemporary with the text ; the latter portion is concerned with the Last Days. The decline of *fianaigheacht* is thus lamented as a loss to society that had already happened.²⁶ One may suspect that the nostalgic and elegiac strains in literary *fianaigheacht* had an early beginning from the tone of such references.

Real *fianaigheacht*, which was gone by the period when the lays were written, was certainly a real phenomenon with reasonable historical documentation. The literature certainly has a mythological level in the persons of Fionn and his close associates, but the extinction of the actual social practice and the popularity of the adventures of Fionn leading to literary creations further removed from the historical *fiana* result in something new with changed associations, until *fianaigheacht* became almost synonymous, at least in a literary context, with the adventures of Fionn by the end of the Middle Ages.

(b) Historical Development

The earliest glimpses of Fionn in literature have moved well beyond the original legend. Fenian names and battles are associated with places in *dinnsheanchas*, with a small lyric commemorating a fallen warrior whose burial mound, etc., is the subject of the piece of lore. The major Fenian warriors are present in such a way that one can only assume that the reader was expected to be familiar with them. At the close of the Old Gaelic period, the literary contents of the cycle (as preserved in premodern MSS, like so much other earlier literature,) were already a substantial body. The Middle Gaelic period, in addition to providing further texts of the type surviving from earlier, saw the composition of *Agallamh na Seanórach*, the

²⁴ Cf. Daniel Binchy, 'The Passing of the Old Order,' *The Impact of the Scandinavian Invasions on the Celtic-speaking Peoples c. 800-1100 A.D.*, ed. Brian Ó Cuív (Baile Átha Cliath : Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath, 1975), pp. 122-3, 131.

²⁵ Whitley Stokes, 'The Colloquy of the Two Sages,' *Révue Celtique* XXVI (1905), pp. 5-6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-49.

longest prose work of mediæval Gaelic literature, and the development of the genre of the lay or ballad.

The core of the earlier Fenian cycle is lore and knowledge, not narrative. Prof. Mac Cana has characterised it thus :

In this as in other areas of literary activity the eleventh century was the lead-in to an extraordinary spate of redaction and compilation which conserved much earlier tradition in a numerous variety of adaptations and re-creations. The culmination of this activity with regard to the *fianaigheacht* was the rapid expansion of the specialized genre of the Fionn ballad and the composition of the *Acallam*... As with so much else in Irish learning and literature this period was a turning point for the Fionn cycle, at least in the written tradition, a time when inherited material was assiduously revised and new norms accorded acceptance or consciously devised.²⁷

There is certainly no lack of early material, although it is not so copious as the later portion. A brief investigation of the Fenian material that is unquestionably earlier than or contemporary to the lays investigated in this study will highlight the literary and intellectual tendencies of these compositions and give a sharper contrast for seeing the extent of innovation in the birth of the Fenian lays.

The list of items predating the fourteenth century by Meyer is well known ; he found fifty-nine, of which only two items mentioned are of the thirteenth century. Murphy extended the list to sixty-seven.²⁸ Few of these items are narrative verse, and few are prose tales, although there are some few short prose and verse tales or summaries not dissimilar to some of the shorter items of the Ulster cycle. These latter tend to be items relating to the narrative core of the cycle ; the interchangeable hunts, otherworld excursions, and invader tales have no place in this literature. The two late items in Meyer's list are the *Agallamh* and the prose tale of *Seilg Sléibhe na mBan* from Egerton MS 1782, both notable for their length. A century has passed since Meyer's work, and it is probable that some of his estimations of the age of the texts are wrong. Nevertheless, because none of the MSS in which the items are found are later than A.D. 1400 or so, and since it is clear enough that the items are significantly older in language than the MSS, the list retains its value even without extensive reanalysis as a corpus wherein to seek the general tendencies of the early literary development of the Fenian cycle. It is therefore more useful to break down the remaining sixty-five by their form and contents.

²⁷ Mac Cana, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-5.

²⁸ Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. xvi-xxxi ; Murphy, review of the preceding item, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* VIII (1912), p. 599. A somewhat abbreviated translation of the review has been added as p. 115 to a number of reprints of Meyer's work. The sources of all items noted below and their printed editions are listed in full, and need not be repeated at length individually.

Several longer items are worthy of brief description. Item 2, the 'Quarrel between Finn and Oisín,' is a poetic contest in learned fashion with a brief prose introduction ; it reflects the 'Colloquy of the Two Sages' in the contest of verse, but is much shorter (16 qq.) and in a loose syllabic metre. 3, 'Find and the Man in the Tree,' is a mixture of prose and *rosc*, hardly more than a page in length, describing a mysterious encounter with a fairy woman resulting in a chase when she runs off with one of the *féinidh*. They meet a man who is with a blackbird, stag, and a bowl with a salmon, who is in fact the fleeing lover. Fionn makes several *iomais*, which form the *rosca*. 11 is the famous conflation of Fionn and Mongán, and tells part of the Battle of Ollarbh. 18 is a fragment of an early Middle Gaelic version in prose of the story of Fionn and Gráinne. 19 is the tenth century prose version 'Find and the Phantoms,' also the subject of a lay, found in the Leabhar Laighneach (item 31) also in the Duanaire Finn. 22-6 are names of tales preserved in the tale lists, one of which is lost and one of which survives only in a modern version. 27 is a fragmentary *Oidheadh Finn* ; 37 is another, affixed to a praise of King Cormac. 30 is a version of the Cath Cnucha, which includes a *dinnsheanchas* of Almha. 43 is the well-known 'Macgnímartha Finn.' 48 is the tale of Mac Lesc mac Ladáin and Fionn, associated with the seasonal songs.

There are other miscellaneous pieces that are merely the outline of a tale. Item 6 is the killing of the *færy* Cúl Dub, structured in a triad of days and of thefts of Fionn's breakfast from Caoilte, Oisín, and Fionn himself. It is less than a page in print. Items 7 and 8 are anecdotal explanations in Cormac's glossary.

Item 40 is the poem of the hound of Irúaithe, a short narrative (22 qq.), the only poem of significant narrative in this corpus.

A significant portion of these texts is barely more than learned references. At most they are skeleton tales with little literary development. The largest group of them are in the tradition of *dinnsheanchas*, lore concerning the source of the names of places. 5 is the source of the names relating to Currech, a *færy* opponent of Fionn, and also an enumeration of places where it was legal to slay a man. 50 is about an ogham stone at the site of the battle of Gabair Aichle. Other items of *dinnsheanchas* include numbers 9, 14-7, 28, 41, 42, 49, 54 (poems) ; and 39 (actually four items) in the 'Prose Dindshenchas.'

Others are concerned with legendary genealogy (i.e. not involving tracing existing families, but confined to description of the relationships of the characters of myth and legend). Among these is item 1, a short *rosc*. 4, the 'Reicne Fothaid Canainne' focuses on the

genealogical origins of the triad of *na trí Fothadhaigh*, whereunto all narration is subordinate.

There are other stray pieces which are learned lists. 53, the list of the converted among the *fiana*, is not dissimilar to the genealogies in presentation. 55 is the learned list of the qualifications of the Fenian warriors and a list of the principal members of Fionn's *fian*. 56 is a list of the Fenian warriors. 57 is a list by Fionn of the exploits of Goll.

Lyric poetry is also present in the corpus. Item 21 is the pair of winter and summer poems of Fionn. Fionn has two poems of reflection in the *Bóroma*, number 38. 44 is Oisín's lament after the *fian*. Oisín's *rosc* on the boar of Muir Talláin, number 51, is simply a description. 52 is a reflection of the aged Caoilte.

It is also the case that Meyer included items that contain references to Fenian characters, even though the texts primarily concern a topic other than the *fianaigheacht*. These items do fill out the early material and provide interesting information, but do not have a direct rôle in the development of the cycle. These items are numbers 10 (a poem on days of the week whereupon heroes died), 12 (a triad), 13 (in *Cináed Úa hArtacáin*). Items 20, 22, 29, 33, 34, 35, 46, 47 are the barest of oblique references only. 32 consists of two quatrains on the birth of Oisín, which survive as marginalia in the *Leabhar Laighneach*, where it is uncertain whether they were part of a longer work. 36 is the obit of Fionn in *The Annals of Tigernach*, the earliest explicit historicisation of his character.

Almost fitting into this last category is a historical poem of Gilla in Chomded húa Cormaic, 'A Rí richid, réidig dam' in *Leabhar Laighneach* (item 45). The poem as a whole is a sketch of world history with a significant Fenian section in it, which portion Meyer edited.²⁹ Although the work as a whole is not a Fenian text, it will be of further importance to this study, in chapter VI because it contains one of the few other references to Fionn's *corr-bholg*, and in chapter IX regarding CO, since that lay takes a similar approach to world history.

Murphy's list adds two items of *dinnsheanchas*, four other short poems by Fionn, a tale, and a passing reference.

This corpus is thus unquestionably a learned collection. Fifteen items are only passing references, several in historical works. Nineteen are anecdotes or stories, many of which contain lyrics or *rosc* passages in them, and none of which are far removed from the core progression of the cycle. There are nine non-narrative poems that stand alone. Six items are enumerations of people or genealogies. Thirteen are *dinnsheanchas*. It should be remembered

²⁹ Meyer, op. cit., pp. 46-51.

that there is only one narrative poem of length here. It should also be recognised that among the verse items here, there is a fair distribution of narrators including Fionn File, Oisín, Caoilte, and Fionn mac Cumhaill ; the concentration on Oisín (and sometimes Caoilte) which is usual in the early modern lays is not present in the corpus of early material. If one were to seek out only items resembling lays by extracting longer pieces of narrative verse from the prose stories that contain them in addition to the items listed independently, then one would find five significant pieces in the Leabhar Laighneach and 'The Hound of Irúath' in the Book of Lismore. None of these poems reflects the usual Ossianic form of narration of an ancient survivor to S. Patrick and his scribe Brogán ; there is no concern expressed for justifying the survival of the texts with attributions to characters in the cycle.

If one accepts for the present the dates assigned to them by Prof. Murphy, a significant portion of the lays in Duanaire Finn form the next segment of the development of the cycle. For the time being, these items, whereof a number of exempla are the focus of this work, will be set aside from the general discussion of the cycle. As has been noted, they are difficult to date because they survive in later, modernising MSS. Chapter IV below will examine whether these lays do in fact fill in the gap between the items listed above and those which are the concern of the remainder of this chapter. Once approximate dates can be given to the lays, it will be possible to place them with due precision within the corpus of the cycle, which will be attempted in chapter V.

(c) The Tradition Develops

The next major work in the Fenian cycle is *Agallamh na Seanórach*, the longest piece of literature in premodern Gaelic literature. In it, a complete transformation of the Fenian cycle has already occurred. Before one can discuss the contents of the *Agallamh*, the complexity of its text – or rather texts – must be outlined. Most of the scholarly discussion of the work focuses exclusively on the oldest recension of the text, which has been edited twice and also retranslated into a more progressive English idiom.³⁰ There are, however, four main recensions of the text, which have been most recently described and approximately dated by

³⁰ Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, 2 vols, text & translation (Edinburgh : Williams & Norgate, 1892) item 12 in both vols. ; Whitley Stokes, 'Acallamh na Senórach,' *Irische Texte* IV : 1 (Leipzig : S. Herzel, 1900) ; Ann Dooley and Harry Roe, *Tales of the Elders of Ireland* (Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

Nollaig Ó Muraíle.³¹ There is the earliest one, a single copy of a reduced text of one-fifth the length of the original, the *Agallamh* of 24 P 5 described by Stokes and diplomatically edited by Ní Shéaghdha, and an early modern text which remained in circulation into the nineteenth century. The general consensus has dated the earliest recension consistently between A.D. 1150 and 1200.³² Dooley and Roe are in the minority, placing it in the early thirteenth century.³³

When one looks at the actual MSS, it will be seen that practically none are in fact exact matches in contents, even within a recension. Episodes are added, deleted, or substituted, and poems are frequently added as accompaniments to the prose text : often the details do not correspond. The mix of verse and prose is not unlike that achieved in many of the Ulster tales and elsewhere in the literature of the period. It is difficult to know whether the lays found in the *Agallamh* are the source of prose summaries which accompany them, or whether the text of the *Agallamh* provided a source of tales for the poets of the lays. There is a case to be made for movement of material in both directions within the *Agallamh*. The case of the prose 'Síthiol Chaoilte' in 24 P 5 is a good example of the latter.³⁴ In truth, it is poor practice to speak of 'the *Agallamh*,' because it is more of a genre than a text. What does not vary is its loose structural form : what change are the choices of poems and anecdota which fill it.

It is notable that the *fiannaigheacht* does not feature prominently in the oldest literature ; it is confined to specific items of lore or brief items. There are a few definitely Fenian tales in the mediæval lists of the learned tales, 'Uath Beinne Etair,' 'Aided Finn' (in MS H.3.17 only, and not the Leabhar Laighneach), and 'Echtra Fhind i nDerc Ferna' ; even should one or two of the names of lost tales with titles that are not identifiable be associated with the Fenian cycle, the point is made that this cycle was not being favoured in lists of hundreds of items.³⁵ Even though Fenian material was being used in the contexts of *dinnsheanchas*, genealogy, and synthetic history, where it could not be ignored, promotion of the tales was clearly being

³¹ Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'Agallamh na Seanórach,' *An Fhiannaíocht*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1985), p. 103-6. The major differences in the three earlier recensions are also outlined in Douglas Hyde, 'The Reeves MS of the "Agallamh na Senorach,"' *Révue Celtique* XXXVIII (1921), pp. 289-95.

³² A list of attempts to date this recension is given in Ó Muraíle, loc. cit.

³³ Dooley, op. cit., p. viii.

³⁴ Vid. the introductory paragraph to the prose tale in part II, chapter IV of this study.

³⁵ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Mediæval Ireland* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980). The lists fill pp. 41-65 ; the items listed above are on pp. 43, 44, & 45.

avoided in a learned context. The literature of that time was entirely produced within a monastic context, and it has been outlined above how there was a great ecclesiastical unease with the institution of the *fian*, so long as it lasted. As Prof. Ó hUiginn has observed, the *Agallamh* draws a distinction, separating the noble aspects of *fianaigheacht* from the parts of the institution that were distinctly unpalatable to the Church. The prominence of S. Patrick as mediator of the Fenian lore is certainly one of the chief ways in which this separation was achieved. Prof. McCone entertains a similar view of the *Agallamh* :

Die Absonderung angesehen gewordener *féindidi* und *fianna* von den böartigen *diberga* findet erst später in der Literatur statt und ermöglicht kirchliche Anerkennung der *Fianaigecht* in dieser etwas romantisierten Gestalt durch Patricks Segen in *Acallam na Senórach* (12. Jh. oder später: S[ilva] G[adelica] 1, 94ff.), eine Art *apologia pro vita Finn*.³⁶

This distinction was not long in lasting, for the less sociable aspects of the *fian* come into the foreground again in the lays shortly afterwards ; nevertheless, the anonymous compiler of the first *Agallamh* made the *fianaigheacht* respectable and allowed the cycle to achieve a new literary flourishing.³⁷

All of the *Agallamha* are characterised by a prose frame describing how the aged Caoilte and Oisín meet S. Patrick and his retinue. The group then proceed on a series of journeys around Ireland, during which S. Patrick is instructed about the names of the places through which they are passing and what events happened there. There are many poems of various sorts, including typical Ossianic lays, which fill out the tales. Oisín and Caoilte are converted and die at the conclusion, which is missing in the oldest recension, but present in the others. They leave behind the lore of the *fiana* for all time, preserved by Patrick's scribe.

It is no surprise to find that a large portion of the items are *dinnsheanchas*, naming the places after battles, people buried in a place, or the reason for stones and tumuli. The structure of the journeys across Ireland is an organisation on a path of places, a mnemonic device. The stories in the *dinnsheanchas* in the *Agallamh* are not in general well-known, even in the tradition of the *fianaigheacht*. These are not core items outlining the important points in the unfolding of the story of the *fiana Finn*. Prof. Nagy has remarked that there is a definite pattern to the way that the *Agallamh* places the characters' acta temporally. Caoilte's

³⁶ McCone, 'Hund, Wolf und Krieger,' p. 108.

³⁷ Ó hUiginn, 'Duanair Finn,' *An Fhiannaíocht*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1985), p. 50.

adventures, both those set in the time of the frame narration of the *Agallamh* and those which are recounted by him in the text are interchangeable with each other — and thus form a cyclical pattern of heroic deeds, whereas Patrick's acts are linear, progressing towards conversion and permanent change. Caoilte is the link between the static but regressing past and the progressing present, preserving the significance of the lore by transferring it to Patrick.³⁸

In this context it is worthwhile to take a moment to discuss the problem of Fenian onomastics. There are of course some well known places which feature in Fenian lore, such as Fionntragh, Eas Ruaidh, Almhain, and such. Yet it is significant that these are not the items of *dinnsheanchas* found in the learned poems and anecdotes of the mediæval cycle. Sean Ó Coileáin's analysis of Fenian onomastics begins with the point that a very large number of the places in *fianaigheacht* are unknown, in stark contrast to the Ulster cycle where one can plot out the course of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* on a map without great difficulty.³⁹ He observes that the *Onomasticon Goedelicum* of Fr. Hogan,⁴⁰ in which Stokes had placed so much faith in clearing the difficulties in the *Agallamh*, in the end proved nearly useless for that task because the imprecision of geography was in the text itself, which is more a romantic type exploration of the world of the *fiana* than a treatise on the geography of Ireland. He uses the example of three quatrains from the ballad of the Blackbird of Doire an Chairn, containing nine placenames. Of them only three could be potentially identified with known places, and only one (Cruachain Chuinn) must designate a single known place.⁴¹ He suggests an entirely different method of reading :

[E]ach also forms part of the texture of the poem and the cumulative effect is not so much referential as evocative ; in other words it would be quite in order to write all except Cruachain with lowercase initials, so that they point inwards to the poem and to their own contextual relationship rather than outwards to some location beyond : we are shown the wood on the mound, the cliff of the berries, the lake/inlet of the three narrows, the ridge of two lakes, the glen of the spectres, the hill of the blossoms, the beautiful glen and the strand of the red stones — everywhere and nowhere.⁴²

The *Index Nominum* in part II of this study attempts to tread a fine line as it tries to identify

³⁸ Joseph Nagy, 'Compositional Concerns in the *Acallam na Senórach*,' *Sages Saints and Storytellers*, edd. Donnchadh Ó Corráin & al. (Maynooth : An Sagart, 1989), pp. 150 & 155.

³⁹ Ó Coileáin, 'Place and Placename in *Fianaigheacht*,' *Studia Hibernica* XXVII (1993), p. 45.

⁴⁰ Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin : Hodges & Figges, 1910).

⁴¹ Ó Coileáin, op. cit, p. 54.

⁴² Ibid., p. 56.

places, such as Creamh-choille in 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' q. 44, where Bran is reminded of the time he slew a boar in that place. The question is whether it is one of the places of that name ; such exist in Co. Galway and Co. Tyrconnell, and there may be more yet if one consults local names or the Ordnance Surveys for places more obscure, or the name could have ceased to be applied to the intended locus without a trace. The name is also sensually evocative in poetry to present a wood characterised by wild garlic, a scent of spring and a pleasant evocation of the forest, within a list of interesting sites of past chases. Both approaches have merit, and it is often unclear which was intended. Ó Coileáin notes that such names would have caused no problems, as a reader or listener would not necessarily attempt to make an identification, and would 'settle unquestioned in the imagination.'⁴³ He also notes that Fenian names are not always the only names cited, thus marking out these explanations as a history. But it should be recalled that the 'new' names are not always placeable either.⁴⁴ Prof. Meek has noted that the lay about the death of Diarmaid has given rise to such double sets from the nativisation of the poem to the area in the case of Beinn Tianabhaig on Skye, which is often said to have been Beinn Ghulbainn, the site of the hero's death. 'A locality could thus come to have two sets of place-names, with both in use at the same time, the one set belonging to the physical geography of the area, and the other to the narratives which had come to be associated with it.'⁴⁵ The ballads, according to Meek, regardless of whether they created places to confirm the actions in the lay, gave it a specific focus, or evoked a mood by their meaning, could move the maps ; 'They were not tied to one particular location, even the "original" location. As they travelled through the Gaelic world, the ballads took their topographical luggage with them.'⁴⁶ Even when the ballads did not carry luggage, it is scarcely easier to analyse those that travelled light : Dr. Anja Gunderloch has noted that in Scottish versions of 'Duan na Ceàrdaich,' the names of specific places are gradually replaced with general descriptions of unlocatable terrain.⁴⁷

Fenian *dinnsheanchas* is thus to be regarded as only partially scholarly,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 59.

⁴⁵ Donald Meek, 'Place-names and Literature: Evidence from the Gaelic Ballads,' *The Uses of Place-Names*, ed. Simon Taylor (Edinburgh : Scottish Cultural Press, 1998), p. 166, cf. the maps on pp. 155-7 placing other mountains associated with this lay as 'Beinn Ghulbainn.'

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁷ Anja Gunderloch, *The Cath Gabhra Family of Ballads – a Study in Textual Relationships* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1997), p. 100.

operating within the genre of the *dinnsheanchas*, but it is for the sake of borrowing the conventions of that genre to tell the story, and not necessarily to relate fact, that it is used. In the genre of the heroic ballad, although the particular example is of the Ulster Cycle, Prof. Meek explores the places associated with the hero Fraoch. There are a number of places which have *dinnsheanchas* explanations in *Táin Bó Fraíich* relating to places in Connaught ; and from the ballad about Fraoch's death in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, there are several sets of Scottish placenames. Some of these are caused by the simple word *fraoch*, 'heather,' which is unsurprisingly common in placenames. In fact, Meek suggests that the hero Fraoch may have been an invention in order to create the ætiologies. The hero may be suggested by the place, and thereafter the places themselves did not stand still, but imposed themselves in multiple locations, sometimes as second names.⁴⁸ In the *Agallamh*, the tendency is not so far advanced ; there is still a strong sense of definite geography through which the four journeys may be traced, even if some of the places along the way have Fenian names invented for them.⁴⁹ The tendency towards the unplaceable becomes more pronounced in later material.

The *Agallamh* raises an important question, to wit, where the structure of the colloquy arose. Ó hUiginn suggests that the *Agallamh* gave rise to a context of continued dialogue between Caoilte and Oisín and S. Patrick, which became the template for the later lays.⁵⁰ In support of the theory stands the fact that there is no context of S. Patrick in dialogue in any of the lays in the *Leabhar Laighneach*. It is unquestionably the case that the dialogue format became nearly universal for the lays later than the *Agallamh*, and that the popularity of its various forms undoubtedly is a major reason for the shift. The thorn is that some of the lays in *Duanaire Finn*, according to Murphy, antedate any extant recension of the *Agallamh*.⁵¹ *Duanaire Finn* lay V (incipit 'A bhen dén folcadh mo chinn'), dated by Murphy to A.D. 1100, has a Patrician reference, although it is addressed to an unnamed woman. Among the ones

⁴⁸ Donald Meek, "'Táin Bó Fraíich" and other "Fráech" Texts,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* VII (Summer 1984), pp. 10-15.

⁴⁹ Cf. maps 2-5 in Dooley & Roe, op. cit. These plates outlining the journeys, which are found between the introduction and the text, are not numbered.

⁵⁰ Ó hUiginn, loc. cit.

⁵¹ Murphy (*DF* III, pp. cxvi-cxvii) dated 4 lays to A.D. 1100, 6 to A.D. 1150, and 4 to A.D. 1175, the last group of which are roughly contemporary to the oldest recension of the *Agallamh*. He dated 18 lays to circa A.D. 1200, but noted that many of these were ones that he durst not date earlier due to uncertainty. In chapter IV below, it will be demonstrated that Prof. Murphy's dates are notoriously cautious and that many of these poems may in fact be earlier.

dated to A.D. 1150, lay I has the *Agallamh* frame ; XXXVIII mentions the presence of Patrick at the death of Caol (here the character is, unusually, to be equated with Caoilte) in q. 39 ; XVI and XLVII have Christian references, but XXXIII and LII shew no mention of the idea of the conversion of the ancient survivors. There are, therefore, two possible roots of the topos. Either an early lay placed Oisín or Caoilte in dialogue with S. Patrick and thus inspired the *Agallamh*, or there was an *Agallamh* no longer extant which introduced the colloquy form to the cycle. As neither possibility can be eliminated – the evidence is no longer extant – the question remains open. It is in any case clear that the idea of the ancient survivors Oisín and Caoilte living into Christian times was current by A.D. 1100 and is likely a part of the ecclesiastical attempts to tame the *fiana* by euhemerisation of the mythological aspects, historicisation, and the removal of the social and religious tensions which characterised *fianaigheacht* as an institutionalised practice. This scholarly assimilation of the *fianaigheacht* into the realm of learning fixed a form of preservation and promulgation of Fenian lore whereof great use was made over the following centuries.

Whichever genre imported the colloquy into the *fianaigheacht*, there is certainly a precedent in earlier literature : the character of Fionntan, the ancient shape-shifting survivor of the Flood, to whom ancient lore is often credited. A Middle Gaelic poem, which has been little studied, is 'The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill.'⁵² There is no modern edition, and no one has fixed a date for the poem, but the language of it is unquestionably antecedent to the *Agallamh* and the early lays, though it is not certain by how much. Fionntan and the most ancient Hawk of Achill have a long dialogue in verse about their own histories and habits. Both are old, and the closing quatrains are a discussion of their conversion and their foreknowledge that they will die on the following morning and bring the time of the ancients to a close.⁵³ He mentions lasting after the *fiana* in the penultimate quatrain, 115c,d : 'is mé Fintan fial rus-fail/ tar éis na fían co h-arsaidh.' The text contains several heroic anecdotes, and lists of slain warriors of different battles, and long lists of geographical processions, such as is found in qq. 13-17, listing some of Fionntan's abodes. Most of these were pools wherein he dwelt as a salmon in the depths ; it requires no stretching of the evidence to imagine that the salmon who fetches Caoilte's Dipper from the fountain of the deep

⁵² 'The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, vol. I, edd. O.J. Bergin & al. (Halle : Max Niemeyer, 1907), pp. 24-39.

⁵³ Ibid., qq. 112-6.

is the same ancient, for there are other parallels.⁵⁴ More on this subject will follow in the discussion of that poem below. Fionntan also narrates a tale of a visitor from the Otherworld in qq. 66-84, who bears a magical tree that bore nuts, sloes, and apples ('cnú is áirne is uball' q. 82d). In form, theme, and content, this text could fit among the Ossianic lays without problems, save that its characters are not of the Fenian cycle.

The character of Fionntan is unquestionably in the minds of at least one of the authors of the lays ; Oisín tells Patrick in 'Laoidh Scíth Finn' q. 8c that Fionntan is the last of the ancient heroes, apart from himself and Caoilte. As a salmon of knowledge, he may well have been a part of popular tale, especially if the salmon of knowledge in the 'Macgnímrada Finn' or other such tales with ancient salmon are equated with him, as O'Rahilly suggested ; the function of the salmon is examined at length by Nagy, who does not comment on whether the salmon is Fionntan.⁵⁵ Fionntan is certainly a learned justification for the claimed survival of antediluvian knowledge in the synthetic histories, and his connexions with lore will be explored further in chapter V.

There are further parallels to be explored. Such items as the 'Colloquy of the Two Sages'⁵⁶ contain the element of a competitive dialogue with a resolution, reflective of the mood of the later lays, such as the common lay with the incipit 'Oisín is fada do shuan,' sometimes also (confusingly) called the *Agallamh Oisín agus Pádraig*. It is to be noted that the element of debate and competition in the lays grows stronger in later material. Msgr. Prof. Ó Fiannachta summarises the relation of Patrick and Oisín in the *Agallamh na Seanórach* as 'an imaginative picture of the reconciliation of the Fianna and Christianity.'⁵⁷ The later tradition of the lays, in contrast, contain clashes of worldview, disagreements, and comic misunderstanding, as he illustrates with sections of two prominent exempla.⁵⁸

(d) The Extant Ossianic Corpus

The previous section has extended to the time of the composition texts of this study.

⁵⁴ Cf. O'Rahilly, op. cit., ch. XVII, in particular pp. 318-20. O'Rahilly lists a fine catalogue of places where the ancient salmon exists, although one ought to be cautious regarding his full conflation of Fionntan, Goll mac Morna, and the Daghdha when the evidence is contradictory (p. 319, n. 7).

⁵⁵ O'Rahilly, loc. cit. ; Nagy, *Wisdom of the Outlaw*, passim.

⁵⁶ Stokes, op. cit., pp. 4-64.

⁵⁷ Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, 'The Debate between Pádraig and Oisín,' *Béaloideas* LIV-LV (1986-7), p. 186.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 189-93 & 195-202.

The following chapter is concerned with the collecting of texts, antiquarians, and the birth of modern scholarship. It is a point of importance that these scholarly activities took place not only alongside continuing reading of the poems and romances, telling of tales, and singing of the lays, but also in the context of continued composition well into the eighteenth century. A summary of later Ossianica is thus not only a fitting conclusion to the discussion of the development of the cycle after the period of the texts in this study, but also the background culture of the writers of the MSS used in this study and of the scholars who began to analyse this corpus.

The later Middle Ages and the æra of the Stripping of the Altars saw a rapid growth of the Fenian cycle in both prose and verse. The oldest MS to contain a large number of lays is the problematic Book of the Dean of Lismore from sixteenth-century Scotland. The lays in it, whether Irish or Scottish in origin, with few exceptions appear to be recent and popular in origin.⁵⁹ Although his edition is known to be frequently inaccurate, the ballads have all been printed multiple times, most recently by the Rev. Dr. Ross. His edition must provide the standard referencing of the texts for the present, until the authoritative editions of Prof. Meek are printed ; the ballad numbers in the listings below are therefore taken from Ross.⁶⁰ A few of the Ossianic ballads in the MS bear the names of authors, such as numbers XI and XXIII, which are attributed to Ailéin Mac Ruaidhrí, although the narrator is Oisean (i.e. Oisín). It is also notable that XXIV, part of an Ulster-Cycle ballad in the same style as the Fenian verse in the MS, is attributed to Giolla Coluim Mac an Ollaimh, a bardic poet whose elegy on Angus, a son of John, Lord of the Isles, dating from 1490, survives. A non-heroic poem, a list of warriors in verse, with some joke additions, is attributed to an Ó Floinn. The attributions display an awareness of the modern composition of those texts. Prof. Meek has analysed these attributions more closely, and has concluded that no other MS has such nonlegendary attributions of heroic verse. He believes that 'the treatment of ascriptions in BDL is not merely the perpetuation of convention, but... is governed by an appreciation of the current taste in

⁵⁹ Cf. Donald Meek 'Duanairé Finn and Gaelic Scotland,' *Duanairé Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 33, 36 ; and the introduction to *Gaelic Ballads in the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, forthcoming.

⁶⁰ Neil Ross, *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh : Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1939). The ballads are listed on pp. xxix and xxxi.

verse of this sort.⁶¹ It does remain uncertain whether these are in fact attributions of authorship or of merely the authority for a particularly excellent text, although he tends towards the former possibility.⁶² Fourteen other lays are attributed to Oisean directly. Caoilte has only one, and Fearghus File but two. Several of the lays are Ultonian rather than Fenian ; these are XVIII, XXIV, XXVI. The lay of the death of Fraoch mentioned above, number XXIX, is also related to the Ulster cycle.

Some relate to specific points in the cycle, such as II, where Garadh seeks the head of Goll from Fionn. VI is a summary of the Cath Fionntrágha. IX is Caoilte's mischief, relating the imprisonment and release of Fionn by Cormac ; it is also in Duanaire Finn. XI is the death of Diarmaid. XXII is a brief summary of Cath Gabhra. XXIII is the enmity of Cairbre Lifechar and the *fiana* and another account of Cath Gabhra. XXVII relates to the worsening relations between the Clan Morna and Clan Baoiscne.

Some of the lays are in imitation of earlier learned lore poems, such as I, a list of Fenian graves but which lacks the locations of them. XII is a rather vague list of battles, none of which are crucial to the cycle. XVII is a brief list of warriors. Others, such as III, IV, XIII, XV, XIX are lyric or reflexions. XXV is a reflection of Diarmaid, regretting eloping.

Many adventures in the lays are not specific, such as V, a poem of the hunt. VII is the ballad of the mantle, also in Duanaire Finn. VIII is a stray wisp of a quarrel between Oisín and Fionn. X is a praise of Goll. XVI is a quarrel of Fionn and Conan. XX is purely a dialogue of Oisín and Patrick over the salvation of the Fenians. XXI is the lay of Eas Ruaidh, an invader tale. XXVIII is a praise of Fionn.

Ballad XIV is likely a composite. It contains a battle against dog-heads and cat-heads with a section on the Fenian banners in the centre interrupting the narrative. It is the oldest and most complete text on that theme, and will be discussed below in chapter XI.

It can be seen that a change of focus was happening by the sixteenth century. The taste of the dean and his associates was more for elegy and for adventure than for arcana. Sometimes the ballads that he collected were written around the important foci of the cycle, but equally as often, they were not. It is also notable that Patrick takes a far more important rôle in

⁶¹ Donald Meek, *The Corpus of Heroic Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Glasgow University, 1982), p. 140 ; 'The Gaelic Ballads of Medieval Scotland,' *The Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* LV (1988,) p. 67. The discussion of the connotations of the term *ughdar* 'author, authority' in the Book of the Dean of Lismore is found in pp. 137-142 of the thesis and in 'Gaelic Ballads' pp. 55-8 & 65-7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 141.

the lays than a mere frame device, and that the tendency for a degeneration of relations and a tension between Patrick and Oisín is evident in lay XX. The Book of the Dean of Lismore's contents demonstrate the shift in the verse portion of the cycle and point towards the tendencies of later Fenian *duanairidh*. The only major exception to the tendency is the Duanaire Finn.

As Duanaire Finn itself is of the sixteenth century and of mixed contents, it is worthwhile to sift through the portion of its contents which were assigned later dates for thematic patterns. The scribal note that no more lays were available at that time for transcription is found after lay XXXIII. It provides a natural division. Before that point, only one lay, number XV, was dated as late as A.D. 1400 by Murphy. After that point, twenty-two are as late, including six which postdate A.D. 1500.⁶³ It is also important that after lay L, only two antedate A.D. 1400. Below, the types of the lays are summarised, with Murphy's dates affixed. For the sake of brevity, only the *terminus post quem* of Murphy's date ranges are given each time. There are some slight overlaps of form where reasonable men may disagree about which category a ballad best fits, but the pattern is clear, as may be seen in the following list :

Plots integral to the cycle : I (1150), II and LXVI (1200), III (1200), IV (1300), VI (1175), VII (1175), X (1300), XV (1400), XXII (1200), XXXV (1300), XXXIX (1400), XLVIII (1100), LI (1400), LVI (1250), LXIX (1500). Relic Lays : VIII (1200), XVI (1150), XVII (1200), XX (1250), XLVII (1150). Other Learned (genealogy, *dinnsheanchas*, &c.) : XI (1200), XII (1200), XXXVII (1200), XXXVIII (1150), XL (1300), XLII (1175), XLIII (1200 with later interpolations ca. 1300), XLIV (1300), XLV (1300), XLVI (1200). Lyrics, Laments, Dialogues : V (1100), IX (1300), XIX (1250), XXI (1200), XXV (1200), XXVI (1300), XXVII (1200), XXX (1200), XXXII (1400), XXXIII (1150), LII (1150), LIII (1400), LV (1400), LVII (1500) Hunts: XIV (1100), XXIV (1400), XXVIII (1200), LIV (1175), LVIII (1500), LX (1500). *Bruidhne* and otherworld visits : XIII (1100), XXXVI (1400), XLI (1400), LXVIII (1500). Invader-Tales and Challengers : XVIII (1300), XXIII (1250), XXIX (1200), LIX (1400), LXI (1400), LXII (1400), LXIII (1400), LXIV (1400), LXVII (1500). Other (non-specific in location within the cycle) : XXXI (1400), XXXIV (1250), XLIX (1200), L (1400), LXV (1300)

The overall pattern is clear. Among the lays in the 'other adventure' category, XXXI is the blind Oisín seeking guidance from a shepherd to find rowan berries, so as to break away

⁶³ DF III, pp. cxvi-cxvii.

from the fast prescribed him. XXXIV and XLIX are prophecies of the overthrow of the *Gaill*. L is a tale of Fionn in hell. LXV is the ballad of the mantle, which will be discussed in chapter XI below. The category of lyrics and laments has a shift over time. Earlier poems include war cries, particular laments for warriors, and are characterised by close relation to the action of the cycle. Most of the later ones are laments of the aged Oisín, or complaints about the Christian regimen which he must tolerate.

Learned lays account for a large portion of the lays dated by Murphy to between A.D. 1100 and 1300. Thereafter, these are not productive subgenres ; the lays had begun to shift towards narrative for its own sake. The lays which relate to the unfolding of the central events of the cycle are present from the beginning and continue to be a form for composition through into the modern period. Some events, such as the death of Goll, are the subject of a number of different lays in *Duanaire Finn*. Hunts are popular from fairly early and do not wane. It is in the list of *bruidhean* lays and invader tales that the change of taste in the fifteenth century is most sharply noted. These categories account for more than a majority of the lays composed after 1400 found in *Duanaire Finn*. The pattern of the later half of the lays in *Duanaire Finn* matches that of the Book of the Dean of Lismore in terms of subgenre representation very closely. The lays in the *Agallamh* of 24 P 5 are also beginning to lean towards modern tastes similarly to *Duanaire Finn*, but it also has a conservative and antiquarian leaning as opposed to a popular tendency. When one looks into the volumes of the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin*⁶⁴ dedicated to the lays, or any of the popular editions of that æra (as will be discussed in the following chapter), it is clear how totally the later tastes predominated. Of the relic lays which are the focus of the study, only one of them, 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' exists outside of *Duanaire Finn*, and it likely owes its survival in the later tradition to the hunt and færy mound of the tale inside the learned frame. *Duanaire Finn* is unquestionably a unique MS for its contents ; it places antiquity as its chief criterion for the inclusion of texts, adding other items as filler afterwards. It is a final representative of the learned side of the Fenian tradition, written long after the popular tradition had ascended.

Although this study is primarily concerned with verse, there is always interaction between prose and verse in the evolution of the Gaelic tale cycles, and the patterns for early and late prose follow closely upon the tendencies of the verse. The starting point has been discussed above in the context of the early Fenian tales. Most early tales are short tellings of

⁶⁴ I.e. John O'Daly, ed., *Laoithe Fiannuigheachta ; or, Fenian Poems. Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1856/8*, Vols. IV and VI. (Dublin : The Ossianic Society, 1859, 1861).

the crucial developments in the plot of the cycle. The *Agallamh* in its various forms is the dominant prose at the end of the Middle Gaelic period, but although a late recension of it remained popular, it did not become a model for later prose. A better sign of what was to come is the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century tale 'Chase of Sid na mBan Finn' preserved in Egerton 1782, last among the items of Meyer's *Fianaigecht*.⁶⁵ It contains a unique *Oidheadh Finn*. The prose is lengthier and more developed, but is loosely structured with digression. Another famous tale of this type is the *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne*, an early modern recasting of that story as a long tragic romance.⁶⁶ These tales recast known parts of the cycle, which are mentioned in earlier material, although the tales do not survive in earlier versions.

The only study of these later tales and romances is that of Dr. Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances*; his overview of the Fenian romances is found in chapters nine to eleven.⁶⁷ His discussion includes a large number of tales apart from Diarmaid and Gráinne, including the pursuit tales *Tóraidheacht Shaidhbhe* and *Tóraidheacht an Ghiolla Dheacair*. *Bruidhne* tales make a significant number: *An Bruidhean Chaorthuinn*, *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn*, *Bruidhean Eochaidh Bhig Dheirg*, *Eachtra Lomnochtáin*, and *Bruidhean Bheag na hAlmhaine*. The popular *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, as Bruford notes, is of the same type, although the supernatural element is removed from Conán, but found in the attack of the Tuatha Dé Danann.⁶⁸ Invader tales and battles are prominent as in the lays. Most popular among these is the *Cath Fionntrágha*, which was known in name in earlier tradition as a Fenian battle. There is also the *Eachtra Iollainn Iolchrothaigh*. It is significant that although the *Bruidhean Bheag na hAlmhaine* is in part a quarrel of the degenerating relations of Fionn and Goll, it is not a decisive part of the progression of the larger quarrel. None of the others have any specific place in the cycle at all.

Some of the late romances appeared to Bruford as 'mere re-telling of the folk-tale in

⁶⁵ Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, discussion p. xxxi, text pp. 52-99.

⁶⁶ Among numerous editions, the first is in Standish Hayes O'Grady, ed., *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the Year 1857*, Vol. III (Dublin: The Ossianic Society, 1857). The most recent scholarly editions are those of Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, Irish only, *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* (Baile Átha Cliath: Brún & Ó Nualláin, 1944), and bilingual, *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1968).

⁶⁷ Published as *Béaloides XXXIV* (1966), the Fenian material is pp. 106-33.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 115.

semi-literary language,' such as *Teacht mac Ríogh na Sorach go hÉirinn*.⁶⁹ Shorter examples are also known, including *Tuarisc ar Choire do Fuair Fionn & Fiana Éireann ó Ríogh an Domhainn tSiar* and *Teacht mac Ridire an Ghlais-Uaithne go hÉirinn*. There are other such tales listed by Bruford in pp. 128-9, where he concludes that most of these tales are written versions of folktales from the eighteenth century. They do not attempt to remould the material to the standards of the literary romance.

From these outlines it is possible to conclude that early modern prose romances and tales more frequently tell interchangeable events : hunts, journeys, invaders, which could happen at any point in the main body of the cycle, of which the number is potentially infinite. Only the *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* has a set place in the unfolding plot of the cycle as a whole, and only one other, *Cath Fionntrágha*, has strong resonances of earlier material. Many of the others take names from earlier traditions, but confine use of significant Fenian characters to adventures whence there is no perceptible change to the fabric of the *fian* resulting from it. By the fifteenth century, there is a total loss of new learned Fenian material conveyed through prose. The level lowers to the literary romance and gradually into the folktale. The pattern is like that of the lays, but with the contrast standing starker yet.

Compositional activity in the Fenian cycle slowed by the eighteenth century, but it did not cease completely, and at least in some forms, it has not done so yet. Bearnárd Ó Dubhthaigh places the lay 'Lá dhúinne ar Sliabh Fuaid' among the most recent: 'Go deimhin, b'fhéidir gur san 18ú haois a cumadh é mar dhán agus gurbh é Muiris Ó Gormáin féin a cheap é.⁷⁰ The last lay is possibly 'Laoidh Oisín ar dTír na nÓg,' evidenced in numerous MSS and several editions, usually attributed to Micheál Coimín, and thus approximately dated to A.D. 1750 ; or perhaps the 'Laoidh Cholainn gan Ceann.'⁷¹ In Scotland, the Rev. John Smith was

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 123. The tale has other names, including *Scéal Chéadaig* and *Eachtra Chéadaigh Mhóir*. Sometimes the more traditional *Sorcha* is replaced with *Gorac*.

⁷⁰ Bearnárd Ó Dubhthaigh, 'Agallamh Oisín agus Phádraig : "Lá dhúinne ar Sliabh Fuaid,"' *Éigse* IX (1958), p. 35.

⁷¹ Among numerous editions, *Laoi Oisín ar Thír na nÓg*, ed. Tomás Ó Flannghaile (Dublin : M.H. Gill, 1896), attribution and dating on pp. ix-xi ; Brian O' Looney, 'Tír na n-Óg,' *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin*, Vol. IV (Dublin : The Ossianic Society, 1859), pp. 227-280, arguments of attribution p. 230. Prof. Ó Briain is not convinced that it is indeed the work of Coimín, but believes that it is indeed of that era, cf. 'Some Material on Oisín in the Land of Youth,' *Sages, Saints and Storytellers*, ed. Ó Corráin (Maynooth : An Sagart, 1989), pp. 181-3. Prof. Ó Briain has not made any attribution in his discussion of the lay in the introduction to his edition of the related 'Laoi Cholainn gan Cheann,' *Celtic Connections : Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, Vol. I, ed. Ronald Black & al. (East Linton : Tuckwell, 1999), p. 233 ; but there he suggests that it even could be derived from 'Laoi Oisín ar Thír na n-Óg,' and later yet.

able to pass off two volumes of doctored lays and original compositions in both Gaelic and English as antique at the height of the controversies surrounding the Ossian of MacPherson.⁷² No in-depth scholarly studies of his work have ever been undertaken, but it is apparent that his verse, that of a fluent and educated native speaker, was convincing. His plots also came out of traditional tales that are known, or were based on other lays. It is unfair to call him a fraud ; he merely lived into an æra when traditional composition could not be accepted into the tradition without question.

Later prose and folktale (written and recorded) are large bodies, still being collected. Whenever folktales are being actively transmitted, they are still evolving. Fenian characters are also still making appearances in current literature. The lays themselves have evolved, modernised, and adapted, as the orally collected versions in such publications as J.F. Campbell's *Leabhar na Féinne*⁷³ demonstrate. Messrs. Pádraig Ó Baoighill and Mánuis Ó Baoill's *Amhráin Hiúdaí Fheilimí agus Laoithe Fiannaíochta as Rann na Feirste* contains versions of ten well-known lays collected in the Tyrconnell Gaedhealtacht as recently as 1957.⁷⁴ The author has heard the lays sung in Scotland, where wisps of the tradition yet survive. Despite the fascinating contents of many of these items of the last two centuries, it would be a digression to treat of them ; it must suffice to state an obvious fact, that all scholars of the *fianaigheacht* from the mediæval chroniclers to the present have had contact with the living material to some degree, and that their perceptions cannot but have been shaped by that background.

The total extant Ossianic corpus is vast ; a century ago, Mr. Alfred Nutt estimated that the Ossianica preserved in MSS earlier than the nineteenth century 'would fill some eight to ten thousand 8vo pages' in print.⁷⁵ The number of nineteenth-century MSS is vast, although the contents of them become more stereotyped and the number of texts actively copied tapered away. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century publications of the contents of such late *duanairidh* are listed in section (c) of chapter III below. In order to demonstrate that the

⁷² John Smith, *Galic Antiquities: Consisting of a History of the Druids, particularly those of Caledonia ; A Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian ; and A Collection of Ancient Poems, Translated from the Gailc of Ullin, Ossian, Orran, &c.* (Edinburgh : Charles Elliot, 1780) [English] ; *Sean Dana ; le Oisian, Orran, Ulann, &c.* (Edinburgh : Charles Elliot, 1787) [Gaelic].

⁷³ J.F. Campbell, *Leabhar na Féinne* (London : Spottiswoode & Co., 1872).

⁷⁴ Pádraig Ó Baoighill and Mánuis Ó Baoill, *Amhráin Hiúdaí Fheilimí agus Laoithe Fiannaíochta as Rann na Feirste* (No city of publication given : Preas Uladh, n.d.), p. 74.

⁷⁵ Alfred Nutt, *Ossian and the Ossianic Literature*, 2nd (revised) ed. (London : David Nutt, 1910), p. 8.

pattern of those relic lays whereupon this study is focused is unique, it has been necessary that the author attempt to sift through the entire corpus available to scholarship both in print and through MS catalogues. In the course of this task, he has seen that a significant portion of the major collections of MSS in Britain and Ireland, never mind further afield, have not been catalogued or catalogued only in part ; there are texts therefore, which still remain beyond the reach of scholarship. It scarcely needs be noted that there is a lifetime of work here for many a scholar.

III : Scholarship of the *Fianaigheacht*

In the last chapter it has been attempted to place the texts wherewith this study is concerned in the context of the development of the Fenian cycle. This chapter is concerned with the transmission of the texts and the attempts which have been made to interpret them, both of which are the works of antiquarians and scholars.

(a) Early Modern and Tridentine Scholarship

Although the texts in this study, as will be confirmed in the following chapter, are likely to be the work of the later twelfth and early thirteenth century, the MSS are all early modern. Before proceeding to the specific information known about the background of each MS used in this study, it is useful to describe the evaluations of the *fianaigheacht* in the views of Gaelic scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to understand the reasons why they valued and preserved the lore. Chief among those whose views must be evaluated are Céitinn and the Four Masters, but comparison should be made to the earliest collector of Fenian lays, James MacGregor, the Dean of Lismore.

The Book of the Dean of Lismore

The oldest MS wherewith this study is directly concerned is the Book of the Dean of Lismore, internally dated 1512-32, containing the oldest version of the lay of the *Bratacha na Féine*. It is scarcely an academic tome, but rather a personal collection, containing everything from a copy of the Chronicle of Fortingall to several hundred poems of various kinds and even (quite literally) a shopping list. The MS is the work of Dean James MacGregor of Lismore and his brother Duncan, both originally from Perthshire.¹ The Ossianica in the Book of the Dean is mixed with other verse, not all of which is Classical or learned, suggesting that it was collected for enjoyment. As has been noted in the previous chapter, the Book of the Dean sometimes attributes a Fenian poem to a poet with a modern rather than a Fenian name, though the narrative voice is that of Oisín. It is clear that the Dean, living in the heyday of the composition of the later ballads and prose romances knew very well that much of what he was

¹ Cf. William J. Watson, *Scottish Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh : Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1937), pp. xi-xviii for an accessible published discussion of the background of the MS ; Donald Meek, *The Corpus of Heroic Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1982), chapter I, and his forthcoming edition of the ballads in the MS have clarified many points further, but neither is in print.

copying down for himself was of no great antiquity. Nevertheless, it is significant that he placed heroic verse alongside strict Classical compositions ; as Dr. Anja Gunderloch has concluded, 'What the BDL example shows is that the *literati* of the time considered the ballads in the same class as bardic poetry proper.'² The views of the dean and his associates regarding the historicity of the *fiana* is not explicitly stated, although it would be a reasonable hypothesis to ascribe to him the belief that there was a historical basis for the characters for the simple reason that it is attested both before and after him on both sides of *Sruth na Maoile*.

Céitinn and Tridentine Ideology

By the seventeenth century, Tridentine ideology and Catholic scholarship in Scottish and Irish recusant colleges on the Continent was making a euhemerising scholarly view universal among the *literati*. The colleges were primarily for the education of priests to bring Tridentine practices and devotions to Gaeldom. The documents relating to them which have been published demonstrate that most of them appear to have functioned almost exclusively in this purpose. One may assume strong institutional similarities between them, for a number of them have strong institutional links through the personage of Fr. Christopher Cusack, who founded Douai, Antwerp, Lille, and Tournai, all of which he ran for thirty years.³ It is the Franciscan institutions among the continental seminaries which became the centres of wider learning. Louvain is the most important of these, but there are other significant Franciscan institutions, such as the college in Prague, which produced a broader range of theological and philosophical works and not merely catechisms and textbooks under the patronage of exiled nobility.⁴

The Rev. Dr. Séathrún Céitinn was the most prolific literary figure in Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century. Céitinn is mostly remembered for his history, which is generally read as a traditionalist work without strong ideological baggage ; it is not difficult to avoid considering early modern ideologies when reading an history which ends before the arrival of

² Anja Gunderloch, *The Cath Gabhra Family of Ballads – a Study in Textual Relationships* (Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1997), p. 35.

³ Cf. the collections of rules, regulations, and official correspondence of these colleges printed by the Rev. John Brady in 'Irish Colleges at Douai and Antwerp,' *Archivium Hibernicum* XIII (1947), pp. 45-67 and 'Irish Colleges in the Low Countries,' *Archivium Hibernicum* XIV (1949) pp. 66-91.

⁴ Jan Perez, 'The Irish Franciscans in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Prague,' *Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820*, edd. Thomas O'Connor & Mary Ann Lyons, (Dublin : Four Courts, 2003), pp. 109-11.

the Normans. Recent work, especially that of Bernadette Cunningham, has finally brought a more critical approach to Céitinn.⁵ Céitinn's life is fairly obscure ; he came from an Old-English family in Moorestown, near Nicholastown, Co. Tipperary, ca. 1570, attended a hedge-school, and departed for Continental schooling as a young man, but had returned to Ireland by the time that he undertook most of his writings, ca. 1610.⁶ Céitinn was of the generation before the Irish colleges were established ; it was only in his youth that the English universities finally had become impossible for recusants to attend. He therefore followed regional links to the Continent. The Irish college in Bordeaux wherewith Céitinn has been linked was not founded until 1603, as Cunningham observes ; he would have been a teacher by that time, not a seminarian. She argues that Céitinn received his doctorate at Rheims, but his earlier training may have been in English Jesuit college at Douai, or partly in the Irish college there (est. 1594).⁷ Céitinn unquestionably had a Jesuit education, at least in part, and was thoroughly steeped in Tridentine ideology. Contemporaries of Céitinn found the Jesuit links so strong as to mistake him for a Jesuit.⁸ It is no surprise to find that Cunningham traces this influence as a motivating factor in much of what Céitinn wrote, nor that she views his works as a cohesive corpus despite the great surface differences. Céitinn was a Renaissance man, who wrote a substantial corpus of poetry, a tract on the Mass,⁹ a series of reflexions on mortality ; several minor tracts are also attributed to him. For the present study, one work eclipses the others in importance, his history *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.

Prof. Ó Buachalla's new introduction to the *Foras Feasa* considers the new view of history that appears in Céitinn, where the Renaissance views that created history as a science of the past based upon primary historical documents and sundered it from the branches of the *ars rhetorica*, whereof it had been a subdivision, combined simultaneously with the intellectual arguments of the Stripping of the Altars : 'The importance of history, however, related not to

⁵ Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating : History, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin : Four Courts, 2000).

⁶ Ibid., p. 19 & ff ; Comyn's preface to Céitinn's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ed. David Comyn (London : Irish Texts Society, 1902), vol. I, p. xi.

⁷ Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 25, 27.

⁸ Preface by Eoin Cathmhaolach Mac Giolla Eáin, ed. to Seathrún Céitinn, *Dánta Amhráin is Caointe Sheathrúin Céitinn* (Baile Átha Cliath : Connradh na Gaedhilge, 1900), p. 6.

⁹ For further discussion of the ideological formation of Céitinn's education, Cunningham's discussion, ibid., pp. 32-9, of the continental sources of *Eochair-sgiath an Aifrin*, the *Defence of the Mass*, provides further lists of his religious and political readings.

the past, but to the present and the future... The major value of history was neither moral nor private, but public and political.¹⁰ The fact uncovered by scientific history was clearly intended as a source of policy and direction on a national scale. Thus Céitinn's argument of an unlapsd Catholic Ireland of Gaedhil and Sean-Ghail was in nature also an assertion that Catholic identity was at the root of Irish nationhood, needing to be respected in governmental policy. To achieve this aim, Céitinn's work had a polemical aim of refuting foreign claims about the state of Ireland and thereby creating 'the origin legend of the emergent Irish Catholic nation' :

He was engaged not in a scholastic retrospective study, but in a highly relevant, political exercise. The Elizabethan intellectual rationalisation for both Reformation and conquest in Ireland rested on one simple premise : the Irish were primitive barbarians, bereft of either civility or religion. In refuting the purveyors of that thesis, Keating was demolishing the premise itself and replacing it with the truth, 'the truth of the state of the country, and the condition of the people who inhabit it' (F[oras] F[easa ar] É[irinn] i 2).¹¹

Such views of history as Céitinn was embracing are strongly critical in method of the acceptance of myth and legend, yet Céitinn's history stretches back into the mists of time with large quantities of such material. He did so because that was the material he had, and he needed to recast it towards his end, a history supporting a concept of Gaelic-speaking Catholic *Éireannaigh* who came from many different origins as the true basis of the nation in replacement of the more ethnic concept of the Gaedhil.¹² The ancient invasions and institutions were a vital part of his groundwork, because they documented the origins of the Irish people.¹³

In the context of the *Foras Feasa*, Fionn and his *fiana* appear ; it would have been surprising if they did not. The Fenian warriors had connexions to monarchs such as Cormac and Cairbre Lifechar in the stories. Cunningham meticulously documents the importance of carefully building the concept of the high-kingship to Céitinn's history ; he undertakes it even to a greater extent than the mediæval synthetic historians.¹⁴ Céitinn knew that the Fenian stories were well-known to his audience, and he therefore could not ignore them. Furthermore, the poems and tales could provide him with ways to put flesh on the frame where historical

¹⁰ New foreward by Breandán Ó Buachalla to Seathrún Céitinn, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ed. David Comyn and Patrick Dinneen, 4 vols. (London : Irish Texts Society, 1902-14 ; reprinted 1987 by the same), p. *Three*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. *Five*.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. *Six*.

¹³ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-6

documents failed. Céitinn therefore pulled the *fiana Finn* into his history. To do so was not easy ; he required a heavy dose of theoretical argument to induce euhemerisation. The view appears in the preface, where he dismisses Hanmer's use of the *Cath Fionntrágha* for mocking Irish attempts at writing history. Céitinn's argument is :

[I]s follus nach fuil agus nach raibhe mais stáire fírinne ag na seanchadhaibh ar chath Fionntrágha, acht gurab dearbh leo gurab finnsceul filidheachta do cumadh mar chaitheamh aimsire é. An freagradh ceudna dobheirim ar gach sceul eile d'á gcuireann síos ar an bhFéinn.¹⁵

In the main body of book I of the history, Céitinn treats of the *fiana* again at length. The necessity arises when he must treat of the daughters of Cormac mac Airt, whom he treats as an historical king. Ailbhe and Gráinne are both wives of Fionn in numerous well-known Fenian tales. Céitinn uses a three-pronged argument, that the existence of the Fenians is supported by oral tradition of long standing, documents, and 'monumenta,' whereby he means archæological remains that had traditional Fenian associations and onomastica.¹⁶ He thereafter tries to describe the institution of the *fiana* in an heavily euhemerised fashion with emphasis on such traditions. He begins with the tradition that the *féinidhe* cooked their game in skin-lined pits, as many pits have such folk-traditions attached to them, and the practice was in accord with his documentary evidence.¹⁷ This beginning is a move towards the building of consensus between popular and learned sources. He then describes the *fiana* as a royal standing army with four battalions of *gnáthfhian* and three other of reserves that helped to defend Scottish Dál Riada or to protect the high-king in times of stasis.¹⁸ He describes the structure of the *fiana*, giving titles that appear in the sources definitions taken from Roman military ranks.¹⁹ The oft-cited passage on the qualifications of a potential *féinidh* follow ; these items stress the nobility of the *fiana* as an institution, making much of the qualifications in learning and poetry as much as military skill. Céitinn was undoubtedly aware of the ecclesiastical repression of the institution of *fianaigheacht* as unChristian and antisocial in his older sources. The battles of

¹⁵ Céitinn, *Foras Feasa*, vol. I, p. 50.

¹⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 324.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 326-8.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 332. This section is likely the source of Mac Neill's theory of who the *fiana* were, which is discussed below in section (c).

Gabhair and Ollarbh are treated as historical and used to remove the *fiána* from history in the reign of Cairbre.²⁰ Céitinn is tactfully silent on the subject of the dialogues of Oisín and S. Patrick ; one can only infer that he recognised that the chronology made it impossible for Oisín to have so long endured, but he was avoiding casting doubt on sources as old as *Agallamh na Seanórach* — especially on a subject that could rub sore many a reader. It aided him in avoiding discussion of the unusually long career of S. Patrick himself²¹ or having to create arguments that could cast doubt on the long lifespans of Biblical patriarchs. The Four Masters, by contrast were more conservative ; their Annals do have an obit for Fionn and a citation of Cath Ollarbha, but there are no other Fenian mentions ; Fionn has been kept at a barge pole's length from their history, into which he has not been integrated, whereas Céitinn was careful to use Fionn's marriages to Cormac's daughters to stress his link to the Crown.²²

Céitinn's treatment of the *fiána* is the most important key to understanding the historical development of attitudes towards the Fenian cycle until the twentieth century ; his views were adopted almost unaltered by the scholars who defined the study of Gaelic and Irish history. The views of Céitinn on the subject exhibit many of the same scholarly and ideological concerns of the *æra* that are also seen among his contemporaries in the Irish scholarly community in Louvain, which included the Four Masters.

Louvain

A fresh look at the intellectual enterprises of the Franciscan College of St. Anthony of Padua at Louvain in the (then) Spanish Netherlands has been undertaken by Bernadette Cunningham.²³ Louvain was the great intellectual powerhouse of the Irish in the first half of the seventeenth century, founded A.D. 1607 by Frs. Ward and Conry 'to direct and support an Irish mission to promote the Counter Reformation in Ireland.' It attracted important figures from the traditional learned classes in Ireland to power its scholarship and obtain material in Ireland, including the Conrys, Ó Cléirighs, and Ó hEodhasas.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 354-6.

²¹ Usually a life of 122 years, cf. *AFM*, vol. I, p. 157.

²² *AFM*, s.a. 283-5, vol. I, pp. 118-21.

²³ Bernadette Cunningham, 'The Culture and Ideology of Irish Franciscan Historians at Louvain 1607-1650,' *Ideology and the Historians*, ed. Ciaran Brady (Dublin : Lilliput Press, 1991), pp. 11-30.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

The Franciscans of Louvain shared Céitinn's understanding of the importance of history, but differed in their interpretation thereof. Fr. Colgan's prefaces to *Triadis Thaumaturgæ* and *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ* give another view of Irish history, stressing spiritual renewal under SS. Malachy and Lawrence O'Toole as a precedent for the Tridentine renewals and the work of the Franciscans. It therefore differed greatly from Céitinn, who stressed continuity and the rôle of the sæcular clergy after the synod of Kells.²⁵ The college collected as much historical material as it could alongside the hagiography that Colgan desired to put into print ; a recension of the *Leabhar Gabhála* was made, and one cannot forget the *Annals of the Four Masters*, a work of such scope that it cannot easily be seen as a side-product. These projects required sending scholars to Ireland to collect and copy MS material, which in turn required patronage on a large scale to support the enterprise. There were still native aristocrats, both on the Continent and in Ireland capable of supporting the work ; the most prominent example is the patronage of Feargal O'Gadhra of the *Annals*.²⁶ The amount of travel undertaken to assemble the materials was no mean project itself.²⁷ Although the primary thrust of the Franciscan project was theological, the quantity of historical work is not negligible ; there was a clear linkage in the minds of the scholarly community. Cunningham defines the boundaries of the project thus :

The material collected and transcribed in Ireland was used as the source material for the central work of the research programme, the lives of the Irish saints, and it was parts of the hagiographical studies, rather than the histories and genealogies, which were published by the Franciscans on the Continent in the 1640s. Yet the compilation of saints' lives was not an end in itself, even though the schedule of publications indicates that hagiography was the priority of the Franciscans or their sponsors. It may be useful to see these lives of Irish saints as the link between the historical and devotional writings of the Louvain school. The distinction between theology and history was then a very fine one, and the early modern pre-occupation with ecclesiastical history was inspired in a large part by theological controversies over the origins and continuity of the 'one true Church.' History was at the core of the theological debate.²⁸

The Irish Franciscans thus had a wide-ranging programme of history and theology.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-3.

²⁶ Cf. the epistle dedicatory, *AFM*, vol. I, pp. lv-lxi. Further examples of the evidence of the support and access to MSS that the Franciscans had may be gleaned from the list of transcripts and travels of Br. Michael Ó Cléirigh may be see in Fr. Paul Walsh, 'The Work of a Winter, 1629-30,' *Irish Leaders and Learning through the Ages*, ed. Nollaig Ó Muraíle (Dublin : Four Courts, 2003), pp. 361-70.

²⁷ Cf. Paul Walsh, 'Irish Scholars at Louvain,' *Irish Men of Learning*, ed. Colm O Lochlainn (Dublin : Colm O Lochlainn, 1947), pp. 247-9.

²⁸ Cunningham, 'Culture and Ideology,' p. 14.

History was construed in a broad sense, from legend to genealogy, and included the wider realm of letters in the search for primary documents. The full expansion thus came to what has been summarised as 'a weapon of scholarly propaganda, needed not so much for its intrinsic value but because everyone else was doing it.'²⁹

It is in this context of the feverishly paced intellectual climate of Franciscans of Louvain that Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, patron of *Duanaire Finn*, found himself. It would strain credulity to suggest that such a connexion was a matter of chance.

(b) The MSS of This Study in Context

Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill and *Duanaire Finn*

Of the MSS used in this study, *Duanaire Finn* is not only the most important for reasons of its unique contents, but also has the most unique and best documented history. The past few years have seen studies into the Ulster conspiracy of 1615, the history of the Mac Domhnaill family, and most recently the life of Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, the patron of *Duanaire Finn*. The recent scholarship has not so much disproven the work of the scholars who treated the matter over half a century ago, but rather has shifted emphases and added a wealth of detail, which has proven what were then but guesses with the aid of archival material then unknown.

Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, *anglice* Sorley MacDonnell, is a well-recorded person. There are a large number of accounts of the basic facts of the captain's life which are related here, none of which differ in the essential facts.³⁰ The captain (b. 1592³¹) was son of Sir James MacDonnell of the Route and Glens of Antrim and grandson of the chief Sorley Boy MacDonnell. He was a second cousin to the famous Hugh Roe O'Donnell and also to Hugh

²⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰ Paul Walsh, 'The Books of Captain Sorley MacDonnell,' *The Irish Ecclesiastical Review* Ser. V, Vol. XXX (Jul.-Dec. 1927), pp. 337-51, 561-568 ; Walsh, 'Captain Sorley MacDonnell and his Books,' *The Irish Book Lover* XXII (July-Aug. 1934), pp. 81-8 ; *DF* III, pp. x-xi ; The more recent works of Hector McDonnell, 'Responses of the Mac Donnell Clan to Change in Early Seventeenth-Century Ulster,' *Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820*, edd. Thomas O'Connor & Mary Ann Lyons (Dublin : Four Courts, 2003), pp. 64-87 ; McDonnell, *The Wild Geese of the Antrim MacDonnells* (Blackrock : Irish Academic Press, 1996), esp. pp. 16-37 ; Raymond Gillespie, *Conspiracy : Ulster Plots and Plotters in 1615* (Belfast : Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies, 1989) ; and Ruairí Ó hUiginn, '*Duanaire Finn*: Patron and Text,' *Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 79-106, will receive further treatment below. The last of these contains the most complete and up-to-date biography, pp. 79-99.

³¹ Ó hUiginn, op. cit., p. 86, n. 24.

O'Neill, the second Earl of Tyrone. An excellent summary of the family relations of the Mac Donnells is the chart executed by Hector McDonnell.³² Somhairle Mac Domhnaill was born into the highest circles of seventeenth-century Gaelic Ulster at the time when the native aristocracy was facing its destruction. Upon his father's death, Somhairle Mac Domhnaill became entrenched in conspiracy and treason led by his brother Alexander when his cousin Randall inherited all in 1601 and turned to support the English policies in the plantation. The government records of a kidnapping plot of 1614 name Somhairle Mac Domhnaill among the conspirators. Since no trial date is given, it appears that he avoided arrest. A letter from Chichester to the King and also Spanish documents confirm that Mac Domhnaill was engaged in the Scottish rebellion of his kinsman McDonnell, Lord Kintyre, A.D. 1615. The failure of the rebellion returned him to Antrim a wanted man. He and companions seized a ship at Olderfleet and forced the pilot to sail them through the Hebrides and around Scotland to Dunkirk, France. On arrival, the English convinced the French to arrest them as pirates. Four of the men were hanged, twenty-four sent to the galleys, and twenty-four freed. The Spanish later intervened to have the sentences commuted, but the executions had been done. Somhairle was among the group which went free. By 1620 one Don Sorley MacDonnell (of various spellings) saw service as a captain in the Spanish forces in Bohemia according to the papers relating to the Irish regiment. Documents trace him through the Low Countries and even the Bohemian campaign in O'Neill's regiment through the 1620s, including a commendation to the Infanta for his rôle in the siege of Prague A.D. 1624. Regimental records shew that he was still in command of his company on February 22^d, 1632, when his company received a new chaplain. The last trace of him in the historical record is a debt notice dated April 16th, A.D. 1632.³³ It is assumed that he died shortly thereafter and in military service. Fr. Jennings has identified a grave in the chapel of the Franciscan college in Louvain as that of Captain Mac Domhnaill.³⁴

Captain MacDonnell's two books, *Duanaire Finn* and *The Book of the O'Conor Don*, are his legacy. Although MacDonnell did not write them himself, it is apparent from scribal comments in the margins that these books were compiled for him and according to his directions A.D. 1626. Little can be said of the scribes whom he employed, except that they

³² McDonnell, 'Responses,' p. 67.

³³ From documents edited by the Rev. Breandan Jennings in the appendices to *DF* III, Appendix L, p. 218 ; Murphy, *ibid.*, p. xi..

³⁴ *DF* III, Appendix L, p. 219.

bear Ulster-associated names. Nothing is known of Niall 'Gruamdha' Ó Catháin, who wrote the *Agallamh* at the beginning of the MS. Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, who wrote the remainder, may have been a soldier in O'Neill's regiment in Brussels – which was also Captain Somhairle MacDomhnaill's regiment in the early 1620s – who seems to have suspended or ended his duties A.D. 1626, as records have a single mention of a 'Don Hugo Doharty' receiving payment for past services just months before *Duanaire Finn* was begun.³⁵ Ó Dochartaigh is also the scribe of the other extant MS of Somhairle MacDomhnaill, now known as the Book of the O'Connor Don, which is generally believed to have been begun A.D. 1627.

It is worthwhile to examine the contents of the books in relation to their patron. It is now much clearer that Somhairle MacDomhnaill was a fighter in any number of bands of rebels and a pirate upon the seas ; it appears that Fr. Walsh failed to make enquiries into these areas, probably for the reason of suspecting what he would find. Ó hUiginn's recent paper has drawn evidence from the state papers regarding the extent of MacDomhnaill's career in arms before leaving for the Continent, whereas earlier scholarship focuses on his more orthodox military service thereafter in the Spanish army.³⁶ The extent of this piratical career is, to Ó hUiginn, an important reason for the choice of material in the MS ; '[w]hy a collection of anonymous compositions celebrating the exploits of Fionn and his Fiana was assembled for Captain Somhairle may be explained in part by similarities between the subject of these traditions and the patron himself³⁷ :

Like Fionn, he was a *féinnidh* of noble lineage. Circumstances had ordained that he become a *díthir*, leading for a while a wandering nomadic existence on the margin of Irish and Scottish society, and later living as a soldier in an exiled *fian*. A hero outside the tribe, comparison of him with Fionn would have been quite apposite, and the dedication of a body of Fenian literature to him entirely appropriate.³⁸

The appropriateness of the texts for the patron is unquestionable, yet it is still problematic when analysed more closely. Raymond Gillespie raised a doubt as to whether Mac Domhnaill could understand the texts that he was commissioning :

An interesting insight into Sorley's mind is provided by the compilations of Irish poetry and prose which he commissioned while in the

³⁵ Ibid., p. 217.

³⁶ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, '*Duanaire Finn* : Patron and Text,' *Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 85-94.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

Netherlands in the late 1620s. It is difficult to understand why a Scotsman [*sic*] should have commissioned such works. Certainly there was considerable cultural similarity between the Isles and Ulster so the works would not have been entirely foreign to him. Unfortunately we do not know whether or not Sorley was literate or whether or not he understood Irish [*sic*], especially the formal language of the classically trained poets... One reason for Sorley's commissioning of the works may well have been the simple act of patronage itself which would have been expected of a gentleman of Sorley's standing, and some of the marginal notes by the scribes on one of the documents are in praise of Sorley as a patron. This may explain, in part, why the texts, with one exception, *Duanaire Finn*, are seemingly random collections of poetry and a twelfth century text [*sic*], the *Agallamh na Senorach* [*sic*], which must have had little relevance to the life of a pirate turned army captain. Indeed there is some doubt as to whether Sorley actually ever took possession of the texts [i.e. both *Duanaire Finn* and *The Book of the O'Connor Don*] and at least one found its way into the Irish college at Louvain and was owned by the Franciscan John Colgan in 1658. One of the texts, the *Duanaire Finn* a collection [*sic*] of the stories of the *fianna* which were common to both Ireland and Scotland, may suggest something of Sorley's attitude. They depict Fionn as an outsider, as a man on the margins of society and also as a warrior with a code of military ethics : perhaps in the same way as Sorley saw himself which might possibly explain why he was keen to own such a work.³⁹

Gillespie's essay on the rebellion of 1615 is as a whole very well-researched and clearly presents the progression of the rebellion ; it is surprising to see the extreme extent to which he has detached one of its key players, Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, from his own background : the very background that brought his involvement with that selfsame plot. Despite the shocking assertion that a man born and reared in Gaelic Ireland with ties of kith and kin to the highest levels of the native aristocracy of Ulster could not understand Irish Gaelic – the result of overstressing the Mac Domhnaill family's Scottish origins far too strongly⁴⁰ – the likelihood that the book was not a collection of personal favourites for the Captain's enjoyment remains high. Furthermore, the *Book of O'Donnell's Daughter* suggests that he could read Classical Gaelic ; it was a gift to Captain Mac Domhnaill from John O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and colonel of the Irish regiment wherein Mac Domhnaill served. Although an illiterate might commission a MS, it is unlikely that one who knew him well would give an old family MS clearly meant for personal enjoyment to one unable to read it, or at least understand the contents

³⁹ Gillespie, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-5.

⁴⁰ Cf. McDonnell, 'Responses,' p. 66 for the origins and connexions of the family. Although his father was but two generations from Scotland, Somhairle Mac Domhnaill's mother was Mary O'Neill of Clandeboy, daughter of Hugh. Furthermore, it is clear that his paternal family was Gaelic-speaking in Ireland and Scotland, and also Catholic, allied with Tyrone. The MacDomhnaills, despite being newcomers, were unquestionably part of the Gaelic aristocracy, not part of the plantation. Their use of the Gaelic language is unquestionable.

if read to him at the barest minimum.⁴¹

Gillespie has wended his way to a reasonable conclusion by a back route. The other facts which he cites to establish Mac Domhnaill's reason for commissioning the books form a stronger argument when one does not view the Book of the O'Connor Don as a random compilation. Prof. Ó hUiginn suggests that Mac Domhnaill commissioned three books : one the Duanaire Finn ; one of verse relating to his family, now lost ; and the third book, the Book of the O'Connor Don, received the other bardic poetry which he encountered in the work of compiling the sources for the other two.⁴² This theory that there were three books makes the Book of the O'Connor Don appear planned and not random, and it therefore raises the likelihood of direct involvement of Captain Mac Domhnaill in choosing what he wanted in the books. Thus the recent research into the piratical career of Mac Domhnaill, which establishes better the Fenian element in his character, is so important, for it illuminates the reason why he would choose to commission a Fenian MS.

The possibility that Duanaire Finn was intended for the library of the college in Louvain from the beginning is reasonable. There are two other facts which support such a conclusion. First, the lays of Duanaire Finn, as discussed in chapter II above, are not in keeping with the tastes of the day ; rather, older texts are favoured, especially those with elements of learned lore such as *dinnshenchas* or genealogy. If texts were chosen simply for the amusement of the patron, Gillespie appears correct in assuming that the contents of Duanaire Finn might not be the top choices. Second, the Book of the O'Connor Don did not remain in Louvain, but rather returned to Ireland. The Book of O'Donnell's Daughter (now RIA 24 P 25), which was in the possession of the captain on the Continent returned to Ireland also. The separation of the books hints that Duanaire Finn may have been in Louvain long before Somhairle Mac Domhnaill departed for Tír na mBeo without paying his debts. Nevertheless, the existence of the aforementioned debt has caused Fr. Jennings and Prof. Ó hUiginn to argue that Duanaire Finn was given to the college as a payment against that debt, rather than that the book was

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 72 ; cf. Paul Walsh, 'The Book of O'Donnell's Daughter,' *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 5th Series, Vol. XXXIII (Jan.-June 1929), pp. 561-75 for a description of the MS. Walsh believes that the book was written for either Nuala or possibly Margaret O'Donnell, but it was later given by John to Somhairle ; the dedication (in English) to Somhairle is printed on p. 574.

⁴² Ó hUiginn, op. cit., 105-6. There is another variant possibility on this theory, that Captain Mac Domhnaill was already in possession of the Book of O'Donnell's daughter in 1626. Since that MS contains both prose records and bardic poetry relating to his extended family, it is possible that he did not need to commission such a third MS because he had it already. If the events happened thus, then the Book of the O'Connor Don would clearly be a personal *duanaire*.

commissioned for it. Regarding this question, reasonable men may differ, but one more facet to this matter should be explored : what was the relationship of Mac Domhnaill to the college at Louvain, the most intellectually active centre in the Gaelic world of that era.

The pieces of surviving evidence suggest that Captain Mac Domhnaill had several connexions with the college. There existed a direct connexion between the Spanish army's Irish regiments and Louvain : 'Hugh Mac Caughwell (Aodh Mac Aingil) was chaplain to Irish regiments in the Spanish Netherlands, a connection which continued between the guardian of the College of St. Anthony and military community throughout the seventeenth century.'⁴³ Mac Caughwell, one of the men who spearheaded the intellectual direction of the college's research, was thus chaplain to the captain in the field. Furthermore, Mac Domhnaill had two cousins, Daniel and James, two of his uncle Randal's sons, who were Franciscans on the Continent. James was at the college from 1620 until 1627, (which includes the time of the captain's commissioning of the MSS). Daniel arrived A.D. 1619 and remained there until 1627, like his brother, and returned briefly in 1628. He returned again as guardian of the college, successor to Ward, A.D. 1635 ; he died there a year later, after his father Randal Arranagh had given the college £300 in gold for repairs as a mark of his gratitude. The Mac Domhnaills also supported the friary at Bonamargy in their Scottish lands, which was the Franciscans' chief base in the Western Isles ; it was staffed from Louvain. The connexions of the family to the college were strong indeed ; the captain's relations would have opened the small world of the Irish Franciscans further to him further still.⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that his relation Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill lived much of her later life in Louvain, and was also buried in the same chapel, which was built A.D. 1617.⁴⁵ The sizable sum which the captain owed the Franciscans at the time of his death is a sign of closeness and trust. The location of his tomb in the chapel of the Louvain college is another. There are both personal and family links between the captain and the college ; it would not be surprising for him to be playing the rôle of patron, even if his bibliophilia helped to bankrupt him. Such a view would be in keeping with the observations of Parez on the *modus operandi* of the Franciscans in Prague and elsewhere cited above and with the tactic of the Four Masters in gathering their materials. Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill is therefore likely to have undertaken the patronage of the particular part of the

⁴³ Cunningham, 'Culture and Ideology,' p. 15.

⁴⁴ McDonnell, 'Responses,' p. 64 ; *Wild Geese*, p. 33-6.

⁴⁵ Walsh, 'The Book of O'Donnell's Daughter,' pp. 563-65.

wider historical project ongoing in Louvain that was of appeal to his character at the point when his military star was at its zenith and when he would likely have had funds from the Spanish Crown for substantial involvement in such projects. A conclusion along these lines, that he was acting as a patron of the college's programme of collection of history and literature, whilst tentative, explains why he commissioned the copy of *Agallamh na Seanórach* in Duanaire Finn and why the lays in Duanaire Finn tend towards antiquarianism and learning rather than epic action.

Other MSS

Concerning the other MSS in this study, there is far less of note, as the documentation of the history of the other MSS is far more fragmentary. 24 P 5 is a seventeenth century MS with Ulster connexions. It was collected by Mac Adam in the north, and its orthography and contents suggest that it is unlikely to have traveled far from its origins.⁴⁶ If one accepts the attribution by Nessa Ní Shéaghdha of the MS to Pádraig Mac Óghannan (Patrick MacOnan) based on the handwriting, then it is not difficult to place P into the world of seventeenth century Ulster, and also to see the historical fascination arising from the turmoil of the period, like that which characterised men as different as Céitinn and Somhairle MacDomhnaill. It is notable that there are two recensions of the *Agallamh* in the MS, indicating that the scribe or his patron had an interest in the texts as he got them, and therefore suggest more formal learning. Although Mac Óghannan cannot be traced beyond his MSS, that the other MSS he executed that he signed are *Cath Muighe Léana*, *An Cath Catharda*, and a full copy of *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, also indicates that this was a scribe of learning and historical interests.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, nothing is known about the original patron. One may speculate from the suggestions of formal learning of both scribe and patron manifested in the desire to commission a MS with two recensions of the *Agallamh* and also from the list of ecclesiastical owners of the MS from the catalogue description that the patron may have been a churchman. The fact that the scribe was active towards the close of the seventeenth century, when there were few native patrons to be found, lends some further weight to the hypothesis. Nothing

⁴⁶ Douglas Hyde, 'The Reeves MS of the "Agallamh na Senorach,"' *Révue Celtique* XXXVIII (1921), pp. 289-90.

⁴⁷ Vid. discussion of the MS in the General Introduction to part II ; descriptions of these MSS are found in the published RIA catalogue, s. 24 L 36, 24 P 28, and 24 P 4 ; Ní Shéaghdha's identification of the scribe is found in her edition of *Agallamh na Seanórach* (Dublin : Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1942-5), Vol. I, pp. xxii-xxiii.

firm can be concluded on the basis of the present evidence.

The destruction of the native schools of learning under the penal laws caused a *hiätus* in the scholarship of the history and literature of the Gaedhil, although MSS continued to be copied and written. The minor MSS in this study, L and R, are of this later tradition of the antiquarian. M, although derived from such MSS sources, is part of an attempt at scholarly collection of lays in the nineteenth century under the auspices of the Ossianic Society, which will be discussed in the following section. It is not until the nineteenth century that the scholarship moved significantly forward again, and then only in reaction to the forgeries of Macpherson.

(c) The Long Nineteenth Century

It is not the intention of the author to make a definitive bibliography of the publication of the texts of the Fenian cycle, and still less to attempt to chronicle the Ossianic controversies. Nevertheless, some account of the history of the scholarship of the cycle is necessary before proceeding to a reëvaluation, and a sketch of the development of the scholarship places into greater relief the reactions and tendencies of scholarly movements. To summarise that history in the smallest *reductio* that may be attempted without violence to it, one will find that it is the Fenian material that burnt the fingers of several generations of philologists regarding the dating of the material, and those of historians who were misled by the centuries of euhemerisation. When reactions came from rigorous scholars, some views were strong counterreactions, and the lack of recent work on many Fenian texts has left extreme views, reacting against long dead opinions that were extreme in other ways, as the last scholarly word.

The *Fianaigheacht* was the first area of Gaelic literature which aroused a wider interest, and which was thus among the earliest literature in Gaelic to find its way into print and English translation. The first publication was by Jerome Stone, who published some fairly free ballad translations in *The Scots Magazine* in the 1750s. It is at this point that the notorious James MacPherson intervened with a real, albeit loosely translated fragment A.D. 1760, followed by his pseudoOssianic corpus over the next several years. The sensation caused by his 'translations' and later the controversy generated thereby caused a wave of

collection in Scotland, followed by a number of publications.⁴⁸ The Rev. John Smith published a number of lays in translation in *Galic Antiquities* and later produced its sister volume *Sean Dana* containing the Gaelic texts. Most of these are doctored, and some are likely his own compositions, but modern scholarship has never addressed this publication comprehensively.⁴⁹ John Gillies published a large collection of real Ossianic verse in Perth, A.D. 1786. Gillies' collection was authentic, but scholars have long seen obvious attempts to remove all mention of Ireland from them, though there is no published study of the phenomenon. (*An Almhuin* becomes *an Albainn*, &c.) Miss Charlotte Brooke published the first collection of Irish poems, which included several Fenian ballads in the original and translation.⁵⁰ Many ministers collected lays from oral recitation, which later would find their way to the Highland Society for the 1805 report, or later found their way to the Gaelic Society of Inverness for publication in its transactions nearly a century later. As the controversies deepened, a number of essays on the authenticity of MacPherson's Ossian arose. These ranged from the polemics of Dr. Johnson to the partisan rebuttals of the Rev. Graham.

Two items generally ended the speculation. First, the Highland Society of Edinburgh published the findings of its committee of enquiry, which, (although it buried its conclusions in hedged language), convinced the majority that there indeed existed ancient scraps of 'Ossian,' but that the publications of MacPherson were cobbled together between modified sections of various lays and large passages of his own composition.⁵¹ Second, the 'Gaelic originals' of

⁴⁸ Neither the publications of Macpherson, whether individually published or in the collected *Poems of Ossian* in editions more numerous than the grains of the sands of the sea, nor the defences and rebuttals of the next whole century are of any concern to this study. The fairest description of Macpherson's work and its relation to the tradition is Derick Thomson's *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'* (Edinburgh : Oliver & Boyd, 1952). A full bibliography of the material of the controversies prior to the twentieth century is George F. Black, *Macpherson's Ossian and the Ossianic Controversy* (New York : New York Public Library, 1926).

⁴⁹ John Smith, *Galic Antiquities: Consisting of a History of the Druids, particularly those of Caledonia; A Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian ; and A Collection of Ancient Poems, Translated from the Gailc of Ullin, Ossian, Orran, &c.* (Edinburgh : Charles Elliot, 1780) ; *Sean Dana* (Edinburgh : Charles Elliot, 1787) ; the summary opinions of J.F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (Edinburgh : Edmonston & Douglas, 1862), pp. 100-1, 412 ; and Reidar Christiansen *The Vikings and Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (Oslo : Kommosjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1931), pp. 53-4

⁵⁰ Charlotte Brooke, *Reliques of Antient Irish Poetry* (Dublin : George Bonham, 1789).

⁵¹ Henry Mackenzie, *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1805).

MacPherson were published in 1807, in a dual language version with Latin and the Gaelic.⁵² It did not take long for much of the Gaelic audience to see that the 'originals' often failed to rhyme, alliterate, or scan properly — unlike the traditional ballads. Nevertheless, there were rear-guard defenders of Ossian throughout the nineteenth century. Outside of Scotland and Ireland, 'Ossian' was largely forgotten, but a considerable body of authentic material was already printed from MSS and oral collection.

Through this period, the published works can best be characterised as either the uncritical printing of texts from MSS and collection from oral sources, or antiquarian speculation. There was no academic field in which the study of Gaelic letters had expert practitioners. The older stages of the language were almost indecipherable to the scholars, and when the knowledge began to trickle forth, it took many years to digest. It is from these antiquarian speculations on Ossian that the need for systematic scholarship of Gaelic became evident. The history of the Fenian scholarship thus lies at the roots of the modern academic study of Celtic, which is a point into which a broad historical enquiry would be most illuminating.

The next phase of scholarship, from the middle of the nineteenth century, is characterised by an uneven growth of professionalism, but still rooted in the amateur antiquarianism. It is at this time that interest in the collection and preservation of manuscripts, especially centred around the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin and the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, created for the first time an environment of open access for scholars to large MS collections for historical research. O'Curry's career began in the RIA, and his early fame rests on eventually published overviews of the important literature based upon his lectures.⁵³ John O'Daly and the Ossianic Society of Dublin set out to reclaim Ossian for the Irish. They published six volumes of Fenian literature, both poetry and prose, before their society collapsed financially in 1859. Two other monumenta of Fenian scholarship came from Scotland, from the hand of Campbell of Islay. The first of these is *Leabhar na Féinne*,⁵⁴ a folio collection of the then-known corpus of lays from Scottish MSS and oral collection ; due

⁵² The Highland Society of London, *The Poems of Ossian, in the Original Gaelic, with a Literal Translation into Latin by the late Robert MacFarlane, A.M. Together with a Dissertation on the authenticity of the Poems, by Sir John Sinclair, Bart. and a Translation of the Abbé Cesarotti's Dissertation on the Controversy Respecting the Authenticity of Ossian, with Notes and a Supplemental Essay, by John M'Arthur, LL.D. Published under the Sanction of the Highland Society of London*, 3 vols. (London : W. Bulmer, 1807).

⁵³ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin : William A. Hinch & Patrick Traynor, 1861).

⁵⁴ J.F. Campbell, *Leabhar na Féinne* (London : Spottiswoode, 1872).

to the financial failure of the work, the planned volumes of prose tales were never printed. The second is the criticism of the tales he collected, which is found in volume IV of *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, which contains some Fenian material, and is discussed further below. The Rev. Alexander Cameron also engaged in transcribing more earlier MS materials, but his transcriptions were not published until after his death in 1892.⁵⁵ Many late *duanairidh* were published at the start of the twentieth century, providing an ever increasing body of texts available to scholarship, although the quality of many of them is variable. Most of these editions look back towards the tradition of the Victorian collector of interesting antiquarian fragments rather than toward the scholarship of their own time.⁵⁶ The emerging scholarly view of the nature of the cycle will be analysed in greater detail in the remainder of this section.

The starting point for professional scholarship on the subject is the collected lectures of Prof. Eugene O'Curry. O'Curry's position is one that is immediately familiar : he is reverential to the Four Masters to the point of idolatry, and fundamentally convinced by the arguments of the Rev. Dr. Céitinn. O'Curry recognises that (at least a large portion of) the lays are not truly Ossianic, but compositions over a long period of time, wherein legendary accretions came to predominate. He divides the Fenian lays into modern items and those more than three hundred years old from *fíor-Ghaedhealtacht* or that he thinks to predate the Normans, though he despairs of precision regarding the age of most of the corpus.⁵⁷ (His

⁵⁵ Alexander Cameron, *Reliquiae Celticae*, 2 vols., (Inverness : The Northern Chronicle, 1892-4).

⁵⁶ The more modern lays received more attention in Ireland in the earlier part of the twentieth century. The Fenians had become a nationalist symbol, and the Irish revival movement produced a number of popular editions ; they tended to be collections compiled based on the tastes of their editors, usually from the nearest MS. and generally characterised more by demands of popular readability than by academic textual scholarship. The lays selected are invariably late stories of the hunt, the invader, and the færy-encounter. There have not been scholarly editions of many of these late lays, and their texts vary as much in these books as they do in the MSS. Such editions are worthy of mention here because they have been consulted throughout this study in the search of parallels for the literary contents of texts from the *Duanaire Finn*. In general, such literary parallels have been absent. Among the most important of these editions are :

J.J. O'Kelly, *Leabhar na Laoitheadh* (Dublin : M.H. Gill, 1911) ; Seosamh Laoide, *Fian-laoithe* (Dublin : Connradh na Gaedhilge, 1917) ; An Seabhac, *Laoithe na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath : Clólucht an Talbóidigh, 1941) (a far more scholarly publication than any of the others here listed), and post-war school editions such as Tadhg Ó Donnchadha's *Óir-chiste Fiannuíochta* (Baile Átha Cliath : Comhlucht Oideachais na hÉireann, n.d.) and *Filidheacht Fiannagheachta* (Baile Átha Cliath : Comhlucht Oideachais na hÉireann, several undated edd. [1930s?], followed by a final revised edition in 1954 in new spelling). A popular summary of the lays and tales of the cycle was compiled by Cormac Ó Cadhlaigh (*An Fhiannuidheacht*, [Baile Átha Cliath : Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1936]).

Linguistic changes in Modern Irish have acted to render the lays less accessible to the general public. No new compilations of Irish lays have been printed since those above, and the older ones have not remained in print despite the occasional editions of single texts in academic journals.

⁵⁷ O'Curry, op. cit., pp. 299, 301.

dating of mediæval texts often places anything with preClassical forms some centuries earlier than modern scholarship.) He argues that there were strong historical survivals in the latter of these categories. To summarise his position, O'Curry believes strongly in a historical Fionn and Oisín lying behind the legend :

... it is quite a mistake to suppose *Finn Mac Cumhaill* to have been a merely imaginary or mythical character. Much that has been narrated of his exploits is, no doubt, apocryphal enough ; but Finn himself is an undoubtedly historical personage ; and that he existed about the time at which his appearance is recorded in the annals, is as certain as that Julius Cæsar lived and ruled at the time stated by the Roman historians.⁵⁸

He then proceeds to cite the genealogies in the *Leabhar Laighneach* and the *Annals of the Four Masters* as unimpeachable authorities. O'Curry also treats Céitinn with a respect similar to the ancient books in the discussion quoted here, citing the qualifications of the Fenians from *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.⁵⁹ It is evident that a large section of O'Curry's views on the Fenian cycle are ultimately derivative of the seventeenth-century scholars, with whose texts he is intimately familiar. Regarding Céitinn's *Foras Feasa*, he describes it as an attempt to 'abridge, and arrange chronologically, such accounts of historic facts as he found in them [his MS sources], never departing in the least from what he saw before him,' but with the regret that Céitinn 'should not have had time to apply to his materials the rigid test of that criticism so necessary to the examination of ancient tales and traditions — criticism which his learning and ability so well qualified him to undertake.'⁶⁰ It is not that Céitinn repeats so many of what O'Curry regarded as fables that bothers him, but rather that O'Curry expects an history to be more critical in the evaluation of sources ; he praises the same tendency to repeat the legends in the *Annals of the Four Masters*.

What is most notable is that O'Curry has failed to detect the systematic ideological programme at the root of Céitinn's work, probably because O'Curry, as an Irish Catholic of nationalist sentiment, has been not only blinkered by his own sharing in most of the fundamental background assumptions, but also desires the vindication of Céitinn's general approach, fortified against the assaults of nineteenth-century scholarship. O'Curry devotes two full lectures (viz. VII and VIII) to the Four Masters, one to the *Annals* and one to the other works. He makes no secret of his belief that the *Annals of the Four Masters* is the most

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 303-4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 300-1.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 442.

important single source for the Irish historian ; his descriptions of the work and its authors can only be described as hagiographical in tone.⁶¹ The gap of two hundred years from the time of these great authors to O'Curry's seminal lectures in the Catholic University could well have been two hundred days considering the extent of change of perspective. O'Curry reimported into the scholarship the full acceptance of the synthetic tradition and its emphasis on authority, believing everything which could not be ruled incredible, and modifying the incredible as little as possible before placing it back into the realm of reputable history. Although most of the major acts of euhemerisation had been done before the time of O'Curry, it should also be noted that he was an active participant in that art. Prof. O'Rahilly, as part of his attempt to lay bare the methodological assumptions of earlier scholars, lists places where both O'Donovan and O'Curry explain that magic was attributed to the Tuatha Dé Danann for the reason that they possessed arts and sciences unknown to the Gaedhil of that time, in order to allow the Tuatha Dé Danann to keep a place in the historical record.⁶²

It is from these views of O'Curry that most scholarship of the last century has been built, whether in acceptance of his position or reaction against it. The continuing evolution of scholarly opinion continues henceforth as a dialogue of this position with others.

J.F. Campbell is more than aware of O'Curry's work, and uses it in detail in his response to the Ossianic Society's 'stolen Ossian' theory, thus spreading the approach into Scottish scholarship.⁶³ Campbell is also notable in that he is first to suspect that some vestige of deity lurked behind the Fenians : 'Villemarque holds that Arthur and his knights are but Celtic gods in disguise. Surely the Fenians are but another phase of the same astronomical worship of the host of heaven.'⁶⁴ Nevertheless, he considers the pagan remnants to be only 'debris,' and not the true origin of the tales which he collected or published.⁶⁵ He places the

⁶¹ Cf. his characterisation of them as 'the most important of all in point of interest and historic value,' *ibid.*, p. 140, and 'the greatest body of Annals in existence relating to Irish history,' p. 158, and the panegyric of the usefulness of O'Donovan's edition, p. 160.

⁶² T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), p. 262.

⁶³ 'The Poems of Ossian by Macpherson,' *Imtheacht na Tromdhaimhe ; or, The Proceedings of the Great Bardic Institution. Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1857.* Vol. V., ed. Owen Connellan (Dublin : The Ossianic Society, 1860), pp. 171-227 ; Campbell, *Popular Tales*, Vol. IV, 12-24.

⁶⁴ Campbell, *Popular Tales*, Vol. IV, p. 321.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

historical roots of Fionn in the third century, citing O'Curry.⁶⁶ There is no attempt to explain the apparent contradiction in his simultaneous belief in the historical existence of Fionn and the *fiana* and his theory of mythical roots of the cycle ; it does not appear that he had yet made a synthesis of his research. Campbell's grasp of the historical development of Gaelic at that point in his career was poor, and his philological speculation was of that sort associated with amateurs of the previous century, deriving Gaelic words from Finnish, Phœnician, and Hebrew and considering ecclesiastical Latin borrowings to be native.⁶⁷ His great service to scholarship is his editions of tales and lays ; that he is correct in guessing that the cycle has mythological origins has been hardly noticed despite the popularity of his early works, as his commentaries have been largely ignored by later scholars who have cited his texts. By the time of *Leabhar na Féinne* and his later works, Campbell's understanding of linguistics was greatly expanded, and he helped to make the bridge between his own scholarly generation which had begun without such resources (and now had its fingers burnt) and the new scholars armed with Old Gaelic and the Indo-Germanic language theory.

The linguistic advances in Old Gaelic by German scholars had forever changed the course of the debate. The survival of texts on the Continent in contemporary MSS allowed a credible scale for the dating of Gaelic texts for the first time. The sudden emergence of Old Gaelic, deciphered by academic philologists, gave a sharp blow when scholars in Britain and Ireland suddenly realised that many of the venerable Ossianic texts in the MSS known to them were in fact in Late Middle and Classical Modern Gaelic. Many of the 'ancient survivals' were unmasked now as Early Modern compositions. But at the same time, the previously indecipherable vellums of Trinity College and other libraries yielded a large host of truly mediæval items. These were quickly printed in the new *Revue Celtique* and later in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*. From scholarship of the nineteenth century, it is only the works of O'Curry that survived nearly intact. Although his dating of texts was often faulty, his knowledge of the language was certainly not, and his familiarity with the whole of Gaelic literature makes him a reference not entirely superseded to the present day. Campbell's acceptance of O'Curry's arguments, though qualified, set them as the standard interpretation of the *fianaigheacht* at the opening of the twentieth century outwith Ireland as well as within.

The first réaction against the consensus centred around O'Curry was the theory of Prof.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 31-2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., passim, e.g. vol. IV pp. 26-30, 346-50 for his attempts at linguistic analysis, & vid. his wild mistranslation of a fragment of Old Gaelic on pp. 41-2.

Zimmer. Zimmer believed that the *keltische Heldensage* was a combination of traditional legends and Germanic saga forms.⁶⁸ The first two parts of his work *Keltische Beiträge* analyse what he thought were Germanic elements in Old Irish (in general) and the Ulster Cycle respectively. The third is an examination of the Fenian cycle. His theory is that the Fenian cycle arises almost totally from Norse origins in both form and content. Regarding the forms of the lays, Zimmer concluded that :

... die form dieser einzelepisoden ist vorwiegend die romanze-ballade oder besser gesagt das germanischen heldenlied, wie wir es im norden, bei den Angelsachsen und bei den festländischen Germanen seit den ältesten zeiten kennen. diese form der sage, erzählung von einzelepisoden in abgeschlossener poetische form ist in Irland vor der vikingerzeit absolut unbekannt, sie taucht mit der in jener zeit entstandenen Finnsage auf und ist, abgesehen von einzelnen nachahmungen der form der alten heldensage im 14 und 15 jh., die charakteristische form der Finn- (Ossian-) sage, bis auf den heutigen tag.⁶⁹

In regard to content, he thought that there were four inputs to the cycle, the more minor ones of which were influences from the mediæval romances, the Classics, and the Bible ; the Norse sagas ; a small amount of information about the king Find File, who was borrowed as a historical context for the growing cycle ; and most importantly the tenth-century grafting of 'nordische jarle und der nordischen *fiandr*'.⁷⁰ Fionn is identified as Caittil Finn, an historical leader of a Viking band :

der Finn der sage ist der historische vikingerführer *Ketill Hvíti (Caittil Find)*, der wollänger als ein decennium in mittel- und süd- Irland mit seinen räuberbanden von vikingern und Iren sein wesen trieb und 857 von *Amlaib* von Dublin, dem tatsächlichen irischen oberkönig, (bei *Gabair* in der grafschaft Limerick) in Munster mit seinen horden vernichtet wurde...⁷¹

From the consensus in the previous chapter it is easily seen that Zimmer's views did not gain widespread acceptance ; in fact they were widely ignored. Nevertheless, they are important as a milestone in gathering and dating by philological methods the Fenian texts. Zimmer's work also did open the way towards discussion of the later invader-themed ballads as a reflection of the Norse wars, leading to the work of Reidar Christiansen. Christiansen did not accept Zimmer, for he begins by saying that the cycle 'is itself of much wider extent and

⁶⁸ Heinrich Zimmer, 'Keltische Beiträge,' *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur*, part I, XXXII (1888) pp. 196-333 ; part II, XXXIII (1889), pp. 129-220, 257-338 ; part III, XXXV (1891), pp. 1-172.

⁶⁹ Ibid., part III, p. 33.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 30-31, 36, 47.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 145.

goes back several centuries before the advent of the Vikings,' but he acknowledges that the Fenian cycle, in its later material, contains a large body of material relating to the Norse incorporated within it.⁷² As a folklorist, Christiansen, although writing at the time of the reactions against the previous scholarship by Murphy and O'Rahilly, is unconcerned with speculations about the earliest origins of the cycle, and thus removes himself from the debates which are the subject of section (d) below ; he is content to describe where the tradition and Céitinn place the Fenians.⁷³ Thus there is an enduring value, apart from the great quantity of lays printed and compared textually in his appendices, in his identification and analysis of motifs which characterise the invader ballads and other such later acquisitions of the cycle.

Mac Neill used the introduction to volume I of *Duanaire Finn* to propound an historical theory.⁷⁴ He believed that the *fianna* were an Irish attempt to imitate the Roman legions, thus the first standing army in Ireland. The *fianna* were preMilesian armies, before the founding of the high kingship, which he considered to begin in real history with Conn.⁷⁵ The cycle is the struggle of the Fir Bolg in Connaught (Clann Morna) with the Galeoin of Leinster.⁷⁶ He concluded that the *fianna* were later taken from subject peoples upon whose military service there were no legal limitations, and that they were thus of the preCeltic race under domination of Milesians, and that this later situation of the Galeoin as 'a subject race, compelled to do battle for their rulers' is reflected in the inconsistent and antagonistic reflection of Fionn's relationship with the high-kingship.⁷⁷ The Fenian tales are more modern than the Ulster cycle, which Mac Neill thought to have been adopted wholesale 'as a classic,' chiefly because the Fenian tales were considered largely unworthy of writing by the ruling race.⁷⁸ Eventually, the blurring of lines of race and the rise of the bardic schools created an opening where the back-dating of Milesian history in order to present Ireland as a unified nation with a

⁷² Christiansen, op. cit., p. 1, and rebuttal of the linguistic equation of *fianna* to *fiandr* and the timeline of the cycle's historical development in Zimmer's work, p. 37. (He also dismisses Mac Neill's theory given below in a sentence, loc. cit.).

⁷³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁴ *DF* I, pp. xxiv-lit.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. xxix-xxx.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. xxxi-xxxii.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. xxxiii.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. xxxvi.

history allowed the Fenian tales to take a place in the literature.⁷⁹ The presentation of Mac Neill's theory of race in ancient Ireland leaves him less than nine pages of printed text for the discussion of the lays, mostly concerned with the elevation of Fionn to demigod status and parallels with Classical myths such as the legend of Hercules or Apollo's love of the hunt.⁸⁰

The theory tells mostly about Mac Neill's perception of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and of the recruitment of British soldiers in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century. Of course, a king of Tara could not send his recruits off to India (unless one takes some of the late romances and lays literally indeed!), but would be faced with having a professionally trained, armed, and hostile army around his stronghold. Such practices are inconsistent with the fact of continued rule by the same élite. Furthermore, such an institution, had it existed, would have been mentioned due to its significance. On these grounds, contemporaries such as Nutt dismissed Mac Neill's theory ; since then advances in history have undermined it totally.⁸¹ It is also worthy of notice that, despite the differences of Mac Neill's theory from O'Curry's, both theories were attempts at historical readings of the material, and both accepted the reliability of the annals as the authorities in the matter.

The theories of Zimmer and Mac Neill were innovations rejected by scholarly consensus, which returned to O'Curry. Whitley Stokes, a believer in the historical Fionn, published a fuller edition of the *Agallamh na Seanórach* in *Irische Texte*.⁸² E.J. Gwynn, another scholar who placed the cycle in history not mythology, published the remnants of early Fenian mentions which were contained within the *Metrical Dindshenchus* which he edited.⁸³ Kuno Meyer appears to have held O'Curry's general view in 1910. Meyer's interest is in the earlier material, and he reminds his readers that the Fenian cycle grew, so that the material of the Old and Middle Gaelic is not the same as the more legendary material since the twelfth century. Kuno Meyer provided the definitive list of the most ancient Fenian items which has been discussed in the previous chapter ; Prof. Murphy emended the list, adding seven items to

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. xliii-liv.

⁸¹ Alfred Nutt, *Ossian and the Ossianic Literature*, 2nd (revised) ed. (London : David Nutt, 1910), pp. iii-iv & 53-60.

⁸² Whitley Stokes, 'Acallam na Senorach,' *Irische Texte*, vol. IV : 1 (Leipzig : S. Herzel, 1900).

⁸³ E.J. Gwynn, *The Metrical Dindshenchus*, 5 vols. (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1903-35).

Meyer's sixty.⁸⁴ It is implicit in Meyer's work that he believed in an historical Fionn, even if one so obscured by mythical, historical, and folkloric accretion as to be almost beyond recovery for serious history.⁸⁵ The basic agreement of such scholars (apart from Murphy, who would soon depart radically,) with the old position did nevertheless cause it to be updated with Old Gaelic philology that was not available to O'Curry.

A decade into the twentieth century, the corpus of literature of the Fenian cycle to the end of the Middle Gaelic period was almost entirely printed. The philologists had meanwhile discovered the antiquity of the Ulster tales and other Old Gaelic texts of greater antiquity ; they began to focus their attentions elsewhere and only a few have strayed back, usually with intentions other than literary criticism.

(d) Euhemerisers and Mythologisers

The previously discussed scholars may be characterised as 'euhemerisers' ; although most of the euhemerisation had already been done before them, they continued to rationalise what writings they had in an attempt to write history. Basic questions as to whether what was derived by the method was reliable were not asked. When a reaction against euhemerisation came, it came strongly. Although Prof. Murphy's volume III of *Duanaire Finn* was published after Prof. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology*, much of it was written before. Yet it must be considered that the two scholars were fully aware of each other's views and the position which both came to take together. Because O'Rahilly's study is broader, and Murphy's more specific to the Fenian cycle and the texts of the lays, it is appropriate to lay chronology aside and consider them in that order.

More than five-sixths of *Early Irish History and Mythology* is concerned with history, and mythology enters mostly to outline the other strands in the early material wherewith the study is concerned. O'Rahilly expressed in the preface his disappointment in having insufficient room in the volume to hold all of his mythological work ; he had hoped to print more of the whole at a later time, but he never had the opportunity. He describes his intentions thus :

For a critical examination of early Irish traditions a thorough knowledge of pagan beliefs and myths is indispensable. Experience has shown that without such knowledge it is very difficult to avoid the common error of

⁸⁴ Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigecht* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910), pp. xvi-xxxi ; Gerard Murphy, review of Kuno Meyer's *Fianaigecht*, in *ZCP* VIII (1912), p. 599.

⁸⁵ Meyer, op. cit., p. xv.

mistaking myth for legendary history. With such knowledge it is possible to unravel the origins of the Ulidian and other early Irish sagas, and to reconstruct the primitive tales which have been pillaged in the making of the Welsh *Mabinogion*. It is unfortunate that this highly important subject of 'Celtic religion' has received far less attention from scholars than any other branch of Celtic studies. In no country has it been so neglected as in Ireland, where hardly anything worthy of serious notice has been written on the subject.⁸⁶

O'Rahilly's analysis of the literary cycles is not a discussion of the literary cycles as collections of literature, but systematic attempt at wrenching away all parts of them wherein he cannot find signs of 'primitive tales.' His goals are reasonable ; the approach is a theoretical attempt to reinterpret the materials available to the historian, outlining why many of the sources previously regarded as historical were mythological in origin. The point where he fails to meet his goals is a vast oversimplification of the Celtic pantheon in his attempt to delineate what Scowcroft termed the 'reconstructed "tradition."⁸⁷ Ó Cathasaigh has observed that O'Rahilly's theory was highly dependent on finding heroic patterns in the lives of kings and warriors, and then using the presence of traditional patterns for describing heroes as evidence that the figures were fictional by the fact of the conformity of their lives to those patterns.⁸⁸ Furthermore, he viewed the hero-myth as a struggle between two deities, a hero and an otherworldly figure.⁸⁹ When applied as a systematic function to the materials, the result of O'Rahilly's theory is the equation of the Otherworldly opponent in any number of these myths ; the equation of the heroes who fill the same rôle in the story pattern is undertaken so as to preserve the unity of the opponents in this struggle. The result is an implicit cosmic organisation based upon the ongoing struggle of these two aspects of divinity.

The opening volley against euhemerism, which O'Rahilly defines as 'the treating of divine beings as men of a far off age...⁹⁰ reduces it to rubble, even before the lists of ridiculous attempts at euhemerisation begin :

The euhemeristic method has several features which have ensured it a continued popularity in Ireland. It is easy to apply ; it enables the uncritical

⁸⁶ T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin : Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), p. vi. (Hereafter *EIHM*).

⁸⁷ R. Mark Scowcroft, 'On the Liminality of the Fenian Cycle,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XIII (Summer 1987), p. 97.

⁸⁸ Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 11-12.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁰ *EIHM*, p. 260.

writer to fill up the historical vacuum which he abhors ; and it gives us the flattering notion that the records of our history reach back into a very remote past. Moreover with the lapse of time and the disappearance of pagan beliefs the original divine character of the euhemerized personages became increasingly difficult to recognise and was frequently quite forgotten. Accordingly, it is not surprising that euhemerism still has its votaries... One may readily concede that famous men (e.g. Brian Bóramha and his son Murchadh) have frequently been credited with fabulous achievements in the popular imagination of a later age. But that admission does not alter the fact that the euhemeristic method in general is worthless and misleading, and can throw light neither upon history nor upon religion.⁹¹

O'Rahilly's treatment of Fionn is part of his antiëuhemerist attack ; because he dismisses Fionn as ahistorical, the treatment is mostly a refutation of the earlier consensus. O'Rahilly's discussion of Fionn, after a discussion of the earlier consensus, begins with an analysis of the failure of Fionn to fit into the histories consistently, 'made to extend over a period of four generations, from Conn Céthach to Cairbre Lifechar, his son Oisín and nephew Caílte were, by a later convention, supposed to have lived sufficiently long to have held converse with St. Patrick.'⁹² Fionn's pedigree is also localised and contradictory. O'Rahilly suddenly breaks the discussion and concludes that 'Fionn is ultimately the divine Hero, Lug, or Lugaid, just like Cúchulainn,' who has an epic struggle to overcome the 'Otherworld deity'⁹³ ; for this he considers that the principal evidence is the slaying of Aillén (and Goll, to whom he equates Aillén), and the resulting association of Fionn with the hill of Allen (OG Almu, Almhain in the lays edited here). He concludes by noting that nothing has ever been found of Fionn's palace, fort, or aught else on the hill of Allen: 'The Otherworld is impervious to archæological exploration.'⁹⁴

Chapter XVII is also concerned with Fionn, or rather his wisdom. It is one of the more extreme parts of O'Rahilly's work. It has been touched in the previous chapter, as it is a broad stitching of all of the wisdom figures in the tradition into one god of the otherworld, born of as many bits of over-dissected corpses as was Frankenstein's monster. Goll mac Morna, as a one-eyed-adversary of Fionn, is equated to Balor ; (Lugh, his own opponent, is naturally given full equation to Fionn). The salmon of knowledge is equated with Fionntan, who spent time as a salmon. Since these figures are one-eyed, they can be equated with Goll-Balor. Since Cú

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 261-2.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 274-5.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 277.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 281.

Chulainn, like Fionn, spears a salmon of knowledge, Cú Chulainn and Fionn are really the same character. Nuadhu can be equated with them also for the same reason.⁹⁵ The chapter thus reduces these figures (and others) into two composites : an hero and a wise, ancient otherworldly figure. It is unquestionable that there are borrowings from one legend into another as literary reworkings of myths happened long after they ceased to be believed, but O'Rahilly's analysis begins to read like a paranoid conspiracy theory, especially considering that portions of his work are written more as polemics against older views more than arguments for his own. Along such lines, Prof. McCone has taken O'Rahilly to task for his conflation of apparent sovereignty goddesses based on the case of Medb, rebutting O'Rahilly's attempts to draw 'a one to one relationship between individual literary manifestations and presumed pre-Christian deities,' declaring that 'the type may be so radically altered as to make such an ascription well nigh meaningless in some texts.'⁹⁶ The same general observations can be applied equally to O'Rahilly's discussion of the hero and otherworld-lord figures in the lays. McCone proceeds by the maxim that '[s]ince questions about origins are irrelevant to the present concern with attested narrative functions, it seems best to term such figures in the literature "women" rather than "goddesses"...'⁹⁷ His method is certainly a wise manner of approach to such complicated figures ; whilst their origins cannot be denied, literary characters are more than their origins. O'Rahilly's dualistic system of opposing deities which are represented by the heroes as avatars of them has not gained general acceptance, but his attacks on the euhemerising process proved a turning point in the evaluation of early Irish material.

Even when one disagrees with the tendency of O'Rahilly to see deities behind most literary figures or to see connexions of figures as equivalences, certainly his general desire to unmask origins and not describe texts must be viewed both as logical and systematic in approach and based in the very real need to place early Irish history on more secure foundations, but his method is nevertheless extremist, even from the standpoint of historians. It is also removed in its aims from direct analysis of the texts on literary grounds other than structure. A book on legend, myth, and history is not the place where one looks for literary analysis, although it can be a useful tool for those pursuing it. It is therefore surprising that a

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 318-21.

⁹⁶ Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth : Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1990), p. 148.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

very large portion of Murphy's introduction to *Duanaire Finn* III is made on exactly the same lines as O'Rahilly's arguments. The desire to stamp out the old view of legendary history is so strong in Murphy's generation of scholarship that it pushes discussions of literature almost totally out of a groundbreaking edition of literary texts.

Prof. Murphy's introduction to the third volume of *Duanaire Finn*, following some notes on the MS, begins in earnest with a about a page of text wherein he dismisses Mac Neill's theory and also the views of the euhemerisers at once. Regarding Mac Neill, he considers that the lists of early material in Meyer's *Fianaigecht* render Mac Neill's chronology impossible. The second attack is on method, and is the direction of most of his thrusts. Murphy notes that heroic cycles are usually the result of heroic ages and have some relation to history. He then declares that the Fenian cycle was not heroic, and that comparison of early material and folklore permit the recreation of a 'tradition' that is at the root of the cycle.⁹⁸ The sections that follow describe the folktales and the literary tradition. Murphy at length concludes that the literary material is mostly of the same types as the folklore ; both are filled with hunts, *bruidhean*-tales, dramatic lyrics, prophecies, monster-killings, invader tales, and foreign expeditions. The literature, and other documents, also give glimpses where it can be seen that the folk tradition is old, existing alongside the more learned works.⁹⁹

Thereafter, Murphy moves in a great leap to his attempt to reconstruct the 'residuum proper to Fionn, which is to be found by 'discarding what is either certainly, or probably the application of general story-themes to Fionn's name.'¹⁰⁰ He then proceeds systematically through Meyer's list for the known facts. The descriptions of the material and the growth of the literature around it is a parallel to O'Rahilly, but without the same degree of the equation of related figures ; he finds himself at approximately the same conclusion : the reconstruction of a myth of the hero god against a fiery, otherworldly opponent. Fionn receives the full *reductio ad deum*. It is then taken for granted that the myth was half forgotten – or wilfully distorted – and that the tales are often written by incompetents who misrepresent the reconstructed 'tradition,' although the explosion of the literary corpus in the twelfth century, in the form of the *Agallamh* and related works, did have some learned element with ties to the

⁹⁸ *DF* III, pp. xi-xiii.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. xl-xli.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. xlv-xlvi.

pseudohistorians.¹⁰¹

By this point, Murphy has written eighty-seven pages of the one hundred and twenty-one of his introduction entirely on the mythology behind Fionn and the prominent warriors of the *fian* – much of which is still accepted to-day – without so much as describing the plot of a lay. Of the remainder of his introduction, fifteen pages are on metre, grammar, and dating. Twenty pages only summarise the contents of the entirety of *Duanaire Finn*, not even discussing the lays individually. Half of the section is used simply to describe what the lays are as a genre. Even in the main body of notes, he does not do so : almost all of the contents of the remainder of the volume are philological. Murphy's work thus manages to discuss the origins of the Fenian cycle and to provide excellent philological commentary on the poems, as well as a glossary and indices, but never discusses the contents of the poems in any significant fashion. No one has supplied the deficiency yet. The problem is not that of sins of commission, but of omission.

Murphy's view seems to be that the Fenian lays, even the more complex and earlier tradition in the *Duanaire Finn*, is simple, somewhat crude, and valuable mostly for its ability to shed light on older beliefs and practices. He states that of the prose of the Fenian cycle, only the *Agallamh* 'may be praised unconditionally as bound to delight all men capable of appreciating good literature.' Nothing else, for Murphy, is worthy of more than (heavily) qualified praise.¹⁰² Murphy appears to think that the ballad form gave an opportunity for an effect of sound from the metres and rhyme that emphasised the lyric qualities of some of the poems.¹⁰³ He also remarks upon the heroism of early lays and the charm of the romance and humour in the later tradition.¹⁰⁴ The nationalist tendency in him also remarks upon there being a Celtic touch of what appears 'strange' and 'otherworldly' to the outsider, but at the same time 'countered by their love of clarity, solidity, and reality.'¹⁰⁵ He then proceeds into a string of exempla on the themes of dogs, hunting, and outdoor life, and farming. At the last of these points, he declares that the examples he cites from *Duanaire Finn* are the work of farmer poets

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. lxx-lxvii.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. lxxxviii.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. xciv-xcvi.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. xcvi-xcix.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. ci.

simply because boats, harvesting, and the threat of wolves to livestock are described.¹⁰⁶ That statement, highly contentious even then, has been ignored rather than contested. In the context of this study, which demonstrates the learned motifs in a group of these lays, the response is more substantial than can be confined to this paragraph. It cannot be said that Murphy had a high opinion of the lays as literature. He is occasionally gripped by some philological problem, but otherwise simply treats the lays as material which is not unpleasant, but which is interesting chiefly for fragments which he tries to prize out of their settings. To him, the lays were preferable to the later prose tales, and thus a welcome development, yet disappointing. In the end, Murphy never proceeded on the literary side of the work beyond an argument parallel to O'Rahilly accompanied by a minimalist summary of remarkable brevity of themes in the poetry. Murphy's work can therefore best be described as mythologising ; it undertakes a study of reconstructed Celtic mythology as the introduction to a collection of texts that he scarcely introduces at all. The problem with the mythologisers is not that they were wrong : their theories are at the root of the modern scholarly consensus ; rather, as they rode forth, they rode with blinkers on themselves and saw nothing but the myths which were their goal.

The largest group of recent scholars have been tugging back from the more extreme aspects of the mythologising of Murphy and O'Rahilly, a task which has been long overdue. Two approaches to texts of the cycle have been taken. The first of these is rehistoricisation, a process that began with Richard Sharp and has been championed since by Prof. McCone and which has been discussed in the preceding chapter. The outlines of their work are found in section (a) of the preceding chapter. From their work there is again an awareness that the presence of a mythical element or legendary characters does not divorce literature from the historical grounding of its time and culture, which are naturally reflected in it, even when the events are *figmenta poetica*. The second approach is that of Prof. Nagy, also considered above, who explores the traditional elements, folktale types, and myth remnants, thereby mapping the roots of the literary cycle.

It is meet to return here in conclusion of this chapter to the observation of Scowcroft wherewith this study opened, that, regarding the *fianaigheacht*, '[m]ost commentaries, in fact, concern something else.'¹⁰⁷ There has been a reöpening of lanes of the direct route through the Ossianic corpus in the form of new editions with analyses of the lays as literature. The lonely

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. cv-cvi.

¹⁰⁷ Scowcroft, loc. cit.

work of Msgr. Prof. Ó Fiannachta and of Dr. Alan Bruford must be mentioned as the only scholarship to take great interest in the Fenian cycle in the next scholarly generation. The last decade has seen a renaissance in interest in the subject, as may be seen in the recent scholarship cited throughout this study. In particular, the studies of Prof. Donald Meek on the lays in the Book of the Dean of Lismore in his doctoral thesis¹⁰⁸ and the treatment of a thematically related group of later lays in the thesis of Dr. Anja Gunderloch,¹⁰⁹ which are the foundations for the revival of Fenian scholarship of the last decade in Scotland, stand in the forefront as models of what this study hopes to accomplish for the lays here selected.

¹⁰⁸ Donald Meek, *The Corpus of Heroic Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Glasgow University, 1982).

¹⁰⁹ Anja Gunderloch, op. cit.

IV : The Language and Metre of the Lays

(a) Language

Orthography

It seems best to treat of the orthography first, as it is the cause of so many of the problems that plague the discussion of language and date. This discussion is more a brief introduction to relevant aspects of the orthography of A and of P than a discussion of the system in itself. The more general descriptions can be seen in the general introduction to the text editions in part II of this study.

Apart from the lays in the Leabhar Laighneach, (and those from the eighteenth-century tail of the tradition), Fenian lays do not survive in MSS contemporary to their composition. A, the MS around which this study is focused, is clearly dated by its two scribes to A.D. 1626-7.¹ P is late in the seventeenth century, according to general consensus, as is explained in the introduction to the MSS in part II of this study. There is a gap of four hundred or more years between the composition of the lays and the MSS in which they are found. The orthography of the MSS is that of the period of their compiling, the Classical Modern Gaelic. It is the same system of spelling used into the twentieth century and which is employed throughout this work. This standard of orthography is well removed from the system of Middle Gaelic. The result is that the texts have been nearly entirely respelt and that the MSS are characterised by a dichotomy between the language of the lays and the system of its representation, which are of different historical periods.

There are oddities, such as archaic words that the scribes did not modernise or proper names which were preserved in late MSS in the MG orthography. The mark of lenition is often lacking, again especially in proper names or older forms, for example, *mac Cumaiill* is as common as *mac Cumhaill* in both A and P. The orthography is thus somewhat uneven. Unvoiced consonants, often doubled are used for their final voiced counterparts, especially in common words, ex. *rucc*, twice in SCP 17c, *gabhoitt* SCP 20a. There is also a tendency to engage in slightly perverse pseudoarchaism where the meaning is perfectly clear. The forms most associated with this tendency are *cch* for *gh* and datives plural in *-ph*, which is incorrect for any period, e.g. *oirfidicch* SCP 17a, *longaiph* CO 34b. Consistency is not an issue ; one can find any number of conflicting spellings of the same word or name, e.g. there are two

¹ F. 1r of the *Agallamh* section, and f. 93r of the *Duanaire* section.

characters in the lays of this study named *Aoife* ; their name appears variously as *Aoife*, *Aoíffe*, *Aoiffe*, and *Aíffe*.

Modernisation or pseudoarchaism cause few problems most of the time, but when the scribe is uncertain, the results create further uncertainties. In SF qq. 22 and 23 a word *gaoth* appears, which is to be taken as 'slaughter' or 'destruction.' It thus must derive from a rarely attested late OG verb *gáetid*,² a new simple verb derived from the past passive of *gonaid*, vn. *gaedad* and *gaed*. One cannot be sure about the quality of the *-d* from the late attestations, but whether one argues for modern *-d* or *-dh*, *-th* is a poor spelling. Prof. Murphy emended it to *-t* in his edition. The attempt at modernisation has hidden the form of an ill-attested word, through false parallel with other verbs such as the more common *do-tuit*. At SCA 115d, one encounters *doigébhaidh*, apparently a form from *do-geib*. The parallel in P q. 119d, *thóiccéabhas*, suggests that the form is not merely the usual deuterotonic with an intrusive *i*-glide, but rather a regularising attempt at a prototonic without using the usual stems in *-fúair*. The agreement of the unusual stem and the disagreement of the initial suggest *do-fo-geib*, vn. *tócbail*. Although the chief concern in such an example is morphology, the ways that these MSS recast older texts helps to obscure some of the finer points of the language. Modernisation is likely the cause of corruption of obsolete verbal forms, and it renders them far more difficult to analyse. In other places new confusions are introduced from consonants which had fallen together in vulgar pronunciation: P 51d *an aithnidh*, which appears on its own to be 'unknown', but LM *adhnuidhe* and R *athnaithnigh* clearly mean 'misshapen', and A 47d has another word, *adheitigh* 'very horrible,' which suggests that one must be careful with the reading in P, for the word spelt is a homophone of that which is truly intended. The footnotes of the editions provide further orthographic puzzles ; these range from minor annoyances to severely contorted spelling that can obscure the word.

General Linguistic Features

In summary, it can be said that the language of the lays is more uneven than their orthography. The lays in this study all appear to have signs of composition in the Middle Gaelic period. The MSS both have significant tendencies to modernise, although they often add superficial pseudoarchaism in minor matters, such as choice of preverbs such as the

² Q.v. in *DIL*.

introduction of *ro-* where no perfective meaning is intended as a mere substitute for *do-*. Large quantities of early features are written away in transmission, as the comparisons of the versions of the lay 'The Headless Phantoms' will demonstrate. Some older linguistic forms are fixed by rhyme or other metrical constraint, and thus have a greater rate of survival. More frequently, the lays appear mostly in loose Classical Gaelic, with places where the older linguistic stratum shews through in varying degrees of preservation. The Classical language is well enough documented and highly standardised, so that its general form needs no introduction ; it is the places where the language contains more conservative forms, either predating the Classical system or potentially defying its prescriptions that are noted in the editions and in the section on dating the lays below. Considering the age of the MSS, there is no postClassical language to be expected in A or P, and if it is found in L, M, or R, it is certainly not original to the texts. There is the further complication of register. The Classical language was applied rigidly only in *dán díreach* verse and slightly more loosely elsewhere. It is certainly possible that preClassical forms proscribed to the Classical poet in other genres may have been tolerated, as it was in certain types of prose. 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair' provides evidence for such a hypothesis, which will be examined in greater detail in the linguistic analysis of the poem.

Middle Gaelic

Before plunging into the problems of the texts of this study, it is important to define one term further. The lays in this investigation have been held to be of the Middle Gaelic period in origin. A few words are necessary to explain the use of the term in this study, especially when the texts in question are not presented in accordance with the conventions of that period in the language.³ Although earlier scholarship often gave Middle Gaelic a long period, modern scholarship tends toward narrowing the term to the language of A.D. 900-1100, and works of the twelfth century seem to be called 'Late Middle Irish/Gaelic' by many scholars and inhabit a no-man's-land between Middle and Classical Modern Gaelic. The term is here intended for the types of linguistic forms that characterise the three centuries before circa A.D. 1200, the transitional period of the language. It is the transitional nature of the period which is perhaps more important than the actual years, as it is a period of flux, reaching from the breakdown of the Old Gaelic literary standard to the adoption of the Classical standard, yet elements of the transitional language can be seen in many a text long after the rules of the Classical literary

³ The reasons for the manner of presentation of the texts is outlined in the General Introduction to part II of this study.

standard were generally accepted, as has been documented by Prof. Liam Breatnach in his section 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' in *Stair na Gaeilge*.⁴ The grammatical, syntactical, and phonological characteristics of the period are outlined therein ; no comprehensive grammar or diachronic study of Middle Gaelic has yet been undertaken beyond his substantial summary.⁵

Regarding philological works on this type of language, the number is certainly small by comparison to Old Gaelic or the modern dialects of Ireland and Scotland. There has been a recent study on Middle Gaelic texts from the Leabhar Laighneach undertaken by Dr. Uáitéar MacGearailt ; it provides a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the texts of *Táin Bó Cúalnge* (recension II), *Cath Ruis na Ríg*, *Mesca Ulad*, *Togail Troí*, and *Aided Guill meic Carbada agus Aided Gairb Glinne Rigi*.⁶ This study provides the best modern study of a fairly wide selection of Middle Gaelic prose from a MS close to that period for placement of changes within the Middle Gaelic period. It has proven useful in noting pre-Classical forms which appear in the lays of this study. Nevertheless, his study – although a model of scholarly rigour – has not proven a useful model of linguistic analysis for the present work ; it is a study of prose, which has different tendencies to those of verse ; but more importantly, the Leabhar Laighneach preserves the text in a form that is unlikely to be much variant from the original form of the texts in it, whereas the major MSS of this study, A and P, are seventeenth century MSS with tendencies to modernise in such a way as to prevent analysis along those lines. A case study, the 'Lay of the Headless Phantoms' is presented below, demonstrating how old forms are often replaced in the texts, which necessitates an approach of collecting the forms that are older, individually considered, and looking for group tendencies more than in strict proportional dating. The older study of the language of the *Agallamh* by Prof. Nuner has also been of some use, as it approaches the major Fenian prose text with which some of the lays are associated.⁷ Unfortunately, he concerns himself only with the prose sections thereof, which gives it the same limitation.

⁴ Liam Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge,' *Stair na Gaeilge*, edd. Kim McCone & al. (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1994), pp.221-2.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 227-333.

⁶ 'The Language of Some Late Middle Irish Texts in the Book of Leinster,' *Studia Hibernica* XXVI (1992), pp.167-216.

⁷ 'The Verbal System of the Agallamh na Senórach,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XXVI (1957), pp. 230-310.

Extent of Modernisation

It has often been noted that the *Duanaire Finn* has antiquarian tendencies, and that the unique *Agallamh* in P has lays containing forms suggestive of greater antiquity than the early modern prose of the body text. Yet there is modernisation throughout the texts of the lays, beyond mere orthographical changes. Prof. Ó hUiginn notes that in *Duanaire Finn*, 'Laoithe a bhfuil foirmeachta réasúnta nua teanga iontu, ní gá gur mar sin a bhí siad i gcónaí. Thiocfadh ann d'fhoirmeacha nua i leaba seanfhoirmeacha i ngeall ar thréimhse fhada fháis a bheith taobh thiar de dhán.'⁸ He then proceeds to compare some lines of different recensions of poems from the *Leabhar Laighneach*, Stokes' edition of the *Agallamh*, and *Duanaire Finn* on this point. Some further observations by this method can shed further light on the MSS of this study.

Of the Fenian poems and mentions in the *Leabhar Laighneach*, which dates from the middle of the twelfth century, five are to be identified as within the genre of the lays." The lay that Prof. Mac Neill called 'The Headless Phantoms,' i.e. lay XIII in *Duanaire Finn*, is a most useful text, as it is not only found in the *Leabhar Laighneach*, but also is one of the lays included in the *Agallamh* in P. It thus gives a unique opportunity to see the modernising tendencies of both of the MSS in this study. Murphy's remarks on the date of this lay are noteworthy ; he almost was fooled by the modernisation in the *Duanaire Finn* recension. (Murphy's criteria for assigning dates will be discussed in detail in the following section.)

If no other copy were available the non-inflection of the copula in 14b, 18b and 38c, the non-inflection of the predicate adjective in 14b and 38c, and the occurrence of independent accusative pronouns in 19c and 38b, would suggest that it was not written before the second half of the twelfth century. Fortunately in the *Leabhar Laighneach*, transcribed about the middle of the 12th century, another copy of the poem exists. In this copy both copula and predicate adjective are regularly inflected. It contains two infixed pronouns and no independent pronouns. Its vocabulary and verbal forms are more ancient than the vocabulary and verbal forms of the *Duanaire* version. The original poem, therefore, must have been written as early as the opening years of the 12th century.⁹

The poem is edited by Prof. Stokes from the *Leabhar Laighneach*.¹⁰ The readings of

⁸ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanaire Finn,' *An Fhiannaíocht : Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXV*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1995), p. 53.

⁹ *DF* III, pp. 24-5.

¹⁰ Whitley Stokes, 'Find and the Phantoms,' *Révue Celtique* VII (1886), pp. 289-307.

the copy in P are taken from the diplomatic edition.¹¹ To begin, there are 54 quatrains in the Leabhar Laighneach version, 44 in Duanaire Finn, and 49 in P. Quatrain 38 of the Duanaire Finn version was one of the ones that, as noted above, troubled Murphy for having both independent accusative pronouns and an uninflected copula ; these are as follows in the three MSS :

INuair dobímmis cind ar chind cia nar cobrad *acht* mád Find,
ropsar marba, mór in mod, meni beth Find a oenor (LL, ed. Stokes, ll. 181-4)

Mar do bhádhmar cionn ar chionn. cá do fhoirfedh sin acht Fionn
ba ro mharbh sinne dhe. muna bheith Fionn na Féine (A, ed. Mac Neill, l. XIII, q. 38)

In uair do bhámar cionn ar chionn cia do fhoirfeadh sin acht Fionn
do marbhadh sinn uile dhe muna bheith Fionn na Féine (P, ed. Ní Shéaghdha, p. 180, ll.16-20)

The general tendencies of A and P are similar here. It is interesting that A and P have both made the same substitution in line b of *do fhoirfeadh* for *nár cobrad*. and have *Fionn na Féine* in d where the Leabhar Laighneach has *Find a oenor*. Nevertheless, the substitutions for *ropsar marba* are different ; what they have in common is that they have made a modern substitution for a phrasing which was rare and had become archaic. It is also to be noted that many of the changes would be invisible if the earlier text were not preserved, as the metre has not been violated in P, although one would know something was amiss in A, which lacks a syllable in line c. In both A and P, new rhymes have been found.

The later texts vary a good deal from one quatrain to another in their closeness to the Leabhar Laighneach. Most of the time, the major difference is spelling, or sometimes substitution of a cheville. All three versions match exactly in the opening quatrain. In the second, the differences start to appear : the places named change. In the Leabhar Laighneach, they party goes 'co tech Fiachu fairged gail, cosin ráith os Badammair.¹² Duanaire Finn has substituted 'a ttig Fergus a go ffeibh. issin tráigh os Berramhain.¹³ P is halfway in between, for the names, apart from orthographical modernisation, are as in the earlier version, but the substitution of *tráigh* for *ráith* has been made.

¹¹ *Agallamh na Seanórach*, ed. Nessa Ní Shéaghdha (Baile Átha Cliath : Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1942-5), vol. I, pp. 173-82.

¹² Stokes, op.cit., p. 290, ll. 3-4.

¹³ *DFI*, lay XIII, q. 2cd.

The verbs and copula are rewritten throughout the poem most of all. To take another example, *Leabhar Laighneach* version ll. 81-4 (=q. 21), and its equivalents :

Cid sinni nirsar malla ropsat lúatha ar lémmenna,
fer úan da chlí fer da deis, ní *fhil* fiad bermís. (LL)

Giodh sinne niorsam malla. bá lór lúath ar leimionna
fer uainn da clí fear dhá dheis. ní bhí fiadh nach fhágmair. (DF, l. XIII, q. 14)

Giodh sinne níormho malla, robsad luatha ar léimeanda,
fear úainn dá chlí fear dá dheis, ní *bhiadh* fiadh nach ffoirghemis. (P p. 176,
ll. 1-4, =q. 17)

The verbal system of this poem in the *Leabhar Laighneach* is already very much simplified ; the only compound verbs in it are a few common ones which survive into the Classical period. What is striking here is that one may see the further erosion of the last signs of Middle Gaelic from the verb in endings and tense stems, even total replacement of verbs with synonyms. Not only does *Duanaire Finn* recast the copula in this quatrain, as both A and P had done in the preceding example, but the verb of line d has been recast in another tense with a deponent-derived ending also. Inflexion of the copula, the adjective, use of pronouns, are the major differences between the versions.

The changes are unquestionably far-reaching ; the scribes of A and P, or their predecessors who wrote intermediates, were able to do major rewriting of the lines or to reárrange quatrains so as to modernise as far as their taste or that of their patrons permitted. Thankfully, such rewriting does not appear to have been their aim, although changed phrasings between the recensions of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' do present some examples, e.g. the first couplet of SCA q. 11 and SCP q. 10 where the rhymes are different, but A fixes a nominative form in the use of an accusative, but P preserves an accusative form fixed by a different rhyme. From the scribal tendencies in the *Duanaire Finn* that he saw, Murphy wrote an essay crammed into a six-page footnote on the scribe's own usage.¹⁴ Most of the descriptions made there would also apply to the Northern-leaning scribe of P. More comparison of the scribes will be noted in part II in the linguistic comparison of recensions of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti.'

Unfortunately, the discussion of these scribal tendencies is of more than theoretical interest. Use of inflected copulæ and older verbal forms are the central core of the system of dating proposed by Murphy, which will be discussed in the following section. These features which are regarded as pillars of dating are to be noted as the precise items that the later scribes that produced the surviving MSS were most likely to efface and to cover with rewrites as easily

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 127-32n.

among the most easily adaptable forms. Thus there is the complication that the scribes of the MSS change the linguistic characteristics of the texts through their adaptations of them.

(b) Dates

Introductory Points

For the lays from A, Professor Murphy's remarks in his sections on dates¹⁵ and on grammatical usages outline some of the more interesting linguistic features. It is unnecessary to repeat his observations here. The P recension of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' is of very similar language to A, although the orthography is more consistently modern. The prose body of the *Agallamh* in P, is unquestionably later, and is characterised by the compounding and heavy prose of Early Modern compositions ; it needs not be of much concern, as it is clearly a later derivative of the lay.

The additional recension of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' in P, and to a lesser extent examples from other poems shared between P and A afford opportunities for comparison of the extent of modification of the poems by the scribe of A beyond the dialectal points of Murphy's note, as early forms may be seen in one where the other has innovated. These innovations will be noted below, and have ramifications for some of Prof. Murphy's criteria for judging dates of composition of the lays of *Duanaire Finn*.

The lays which are here edited all bear signs of Middle Gaelic, that is, there are transitional grammatical forms and pre-modern vocabulary found in them, despite some modernisation. Murphy's notes on the *Duanaire Finn* have provided as strong a linguistic groundwork for the dating of the lays as one could hope for these texts. A reëvaluation of Murphy's dates is necessary, although his analyses of occurrences of grammatical and syntactical features are a model of thorough investigation, they were compiled nearly seventy years ago. The points on which general discussion focuses are thus as follows: The holy grail of Celtic philology, the exact linguistic dating of texts, for which Murphy's generation of scholars quested tirelessly has slipped from the fingers of Prof. Jackson into the depths. The question of register as well as date affecting language: the linguistic work of Professors Damian McManus and Kim McCone, and the current research of Dr. John Carey demonstrate that there are complexities of register in dating which were unknown fifty years ago.

Following these general remarks about the direction of scholarship, Murphy's own criteria of

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. cvii-cxvii.

dating will be recalled with notes on which ones still obtain based on Carey's analysis and other philological advances since the 1950s, which may cast new light on previously obscure points. Important among these are the completion of several important landmark projects in scholarship have changed the lay of the land : (a) the completion of *DIL*, which puts more forms and examples, especially of verbal forms, in the hands of a student than could be accumulated by even so eminent a scholar as Murphy over a lifetime of Gaelic reading ; (b) the completion of Prof. Bergin's edition of the *Irish Grammatical Tracts* ; and (c) Fr. McKenna's edition of the *Bardic Syntactical Tracts*, which has shewn how later poets understood forms which they used sparingly or avoided. Some points of comparison of the recensions of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' can also give further insight into the origins of that poem. Remarks on the language of each poem individually will follow thereafter, although the actual body of the evidence has been placed in Part II with the editions of the poems.

Dating : Changing Approaches to the Dating of Texts

The scholarly generation whereof Prof. Murphy was a part was the final one to hold absolute linguistic dating of texts as possible. At places in his introduction and appendix to *Duanaire Finn*, Murphy appears impatient and annoyed that he cannot fix exact dates to the lays, usually pleading that scribal modernisation has removed the milestones of linguistic change. A similar case of difficulty is that of the *Vita Tripartita Sancti Patricii*, which exists in a linguistically uneven text obtained through late, modernising MSS through at least one intermediary, and concerning which Prof. Kenneth Jackson admitted defeat.¹⁶ Jackson's attempts yield only the roughest dates to the half century for both the original draft and the compilation of the text as it has come down to the present. His attempt fills the final 27 pages of the article with an in-depth proportional comparison of the *Vita's* language between two more firmly datable texts, *Saltair na Rann* and the *Togail Troí* in the *Leabhar Laighneach*. By this time Jackson's own estimation of the results of the proportional method for finding an absolute date is low, or at least highly modest ; 'Cumulatively, though, and as a rough guide, the argument may be valid, or at any rate useful, or at worst not without interest.'¹⁷ This article marks the final end of the search for absolute dating, though many scholars had abandoned the

¹⁶ 'The Date of the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XLI (1986), pp. 5-44 ; the stemma, which summarises the problems, is found on p. 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.13.

quest some time before. Prof. Jackson's article testifies to the mixed blessing of the increase of information and availability of additional texts to the modern scholar. Even as the availability of further information and more precise information aided the precision of linguistic arguments, the growth of scholarship has found exceptions to prove every rule and to reduce certainty. The triumph of this second effect shall be outlined here.

Although scholars of the last half century gradually grew more tentative in assigning dates to their texts, the first major blow to the basis of the scholarly consensus was Prof. Gearóid MacEoin's 1981 Rhys Lecture¹⁸ which listed out in detail specific problems which undermined the studies that claimed to date many a Middle Gaelic text. But most controversially of all, he began with a quick remark that even the great works on Old Irish 'lent to it an appearance of consistency and regularity which the original sources do not quite warrant,' as the problems of the linguistic development in Old Irish led to most anything reflective of later periods being relegated to footnotes if an earlier form could be found.¹⁸ The attacks on the monolith of Old Irish have since been the subject of an article by Prof. Kim McCone.¹⁹

When attempting to find a date for texts such as lays in *Duanaire Finn* or 24 P 5, the proportional method remains the best tool of the philologist, and Murphy's attempt to date those in A certainly remains as the foundation for any new attempt. It is to be noted first that the method produces 'dates' that are abstractions of extent of change rather than the actual progression of time, and second that specialised registers did not factor into Murphy's judgement at all, and their effects need to be noted before proceeding to reevaluate the dates of the texts.

Effects of Specialised Registers

Prof. McManus has noted that a warning signal, seldom heeded, in the dangerous waters of dating texts is to be found on the first page of Prof. Thurneysen's *Grammar of Old Irish*, that 'The language of the earliest sources is called Old Irish, that from about A.D. 900 Middle Irish, and that from about the beginning of the seventeenth century Modern Irish.' Thurneysen's 700 years of 'Middle Irish' is far from the usual scholarly use of the term for the language of ca. A.D. 900-1100. A.D. 1200 seems to be the date of the first 'modern Irish'

¹⁸ 'The Dating of Middle Irish Texts,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* LXVIII (1982), pp. 109-137.

¹⁹ 'The Würzburg and Milan Glosses : Our earliest sources of "Middle Irish,"' *Ériu* XXXVI (1985) pp. 85-106.

texts, rather than the date where everything changed over to the forms of the classical bardic tracts and analyses. Thus McManus responds to a hypothetical query concerning what one ought to call the language of the *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill* : 'The answer "Middle Irish" might be given to that question, but this would require some qualification.'²⁰ The insider of the mediæval and early modern Gaelic literary tradition would never have had any understanding of the kinds of divisions which are assigned to the language to-day, but would have seen a linguistic continuum, in which certain registers and forms could be defined synchronically for certain uses, such as bardic poetry or chronicles.²¹ Outside of such constraints, a register could be chosen by an author for reasons of his own choosing, whether more conservative or progressive. It is noted that Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh, author of the *Beatha*, also wrote Classical bardic poetry ; the archaism of the *Beatha* is not his only, or even necessarily favoured, style. Furthermore, the Four Masters, who paraphrased the *Beatha* into their chronicle modernised and rephrased it extensively, although they themselves were using an archaic and formal register.²² Fr. Walsh, in his edition of the text of the *Beatha*, notes that the style is 'highly artificial and archaic' ; such a style was based on the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*'s twelfth-century rewrite and 'may be traced in a large number of tales and semi-historical narratives,' although he does not give any reasons for choosing such a style.²³ Prof. McManus's conclusion, supported by the weight of his detailed linguistic analysis of parallels, expands well beyond Fr. Walsh's suggestions regarding the reasons for such stylistic archaisms, noting that it 'lies more in Ó Cléirigh's agenda than in any suggestion that it was dictated by professional norms. Ó Cléirigh was celebrating the life of a man he regarded and portrays as the last of the Gaelic chieftains.'²⁴ Thus the style of heroic sagas is reflected consciously, making Ó Domhnaill into an heroic warrior figure, cast in the mould of the Ulster cycle, and creating what Prof. McManus notes is 'not really the "Life" of Red Hugh

²⁰ Damian McManus, 'The Language of the *Beatha*', *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh : The Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell : Historical and Literary Contexts*, ed. Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2002), p. 54 ; the main body of the adaptation is in *AFM*, vols. V-VI, pp. 1,859- 2,299, A.D. 1597-1602. It is interspersed with other material throughout.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²² *Ibid.*, example passages pp. 67-8, conclusion p. 71.

²³ Pól Breathnach / The Rev. Paul Walsh, ed., *Beatha Aodh Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill* (Dublin : Irish Text Society, 1948-57), vol. II, pp. 18-9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

O'Donnell, but rather his "heroic biography".²⁵

Although McManus's study is concerned with a late text with features that appear to be early, the arguments open the gap in the dating system further yet. There is another text which has raised similar question in the Old Gaelic period. Liam Breatnach's edition of 'Amra Senáin' concludes that the text is from the tenth century. The MSS state that it is an archaic text by Dallán Forgaill, author of the 'Amhra Coluim Chille.' Despite the attribution, the text has too many modernisms to be from the Archaic period. After listing some of the forms of *u*-stem nouns and other declensional points that pointed to the end of the Old Gaelic period, Breatnach began looking at other suggestions of authorship. One MS had a reference in it that attributed a line of it to Cormac mac Cuilennáin, the compiler of Cormac's glossary. He then found that the rare words in the 'Amra Senáin' are found in that glossary, making the attribution highly likely. Cormac, a capable antiquarian must therefore have chosen to imitate the language of the 'Amra Coluim Chille,' finding such language appropriate to his subject.²⁶

In the course of the study described above, several distinct higher registers of later mediæval and early modern Gaelic: bardic, annalistic, and heroic – all used synchronically – are described and compared, and the usage of lower registers is also noted. It has also been seen that the later mediæval idea of register choice has precedent in the earlier middle ages in the 'Amra Senáin,' suggesting that it is a strand which extends throughout the literary tradition. The modern assumption that register is a linear scale from high to low with a single point on each end must be unmasked as inapplicable to the Gaelic tradition for much of its history. It is notable that the poems considered in this study are generally considered to fit into the centre of the linguistic continuum and on the fringes of bardic conventions, whereby they are influenced but not bound. This area is the one in which problems of register and authorial intention are likely to cause the greatest difficulties to those hoping to date a text, even when the difficulty of late MSS with modernisations does not come into play.

It is also useful to consider briefly the genre, both as it existed and developed. The choice of metre in itself does give clues concerning the register of the work, and thus what type of language one might expect. The specific metres employed will be discussed in the second half of this chapter ; for the time being, it is sufficient to note that the poems of A and of P are

²⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

²⁶ Liam Breatnach, 'An Edition of *Amra Senáin*,' *Sages Saints and Storytellers : Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, Donnachadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, & Kim McCone, edd. (Maynooth : An Sagart, 1989), pp. 19-20, 23.

all to be classified as written in *ógláchas*, which is the more casual form of the metres in general, and are not compliant with the full rigours of the more difficult and prestigious *dán direach*. Casual metres affect the language in two ways : they naturally allow for more modernising and tampering because fewer words must rhyme or alliterate than in *dán direach*, or are permitted to rhyme less perfectly ; and they appear to be tied to a more casual approach to language and thus lower register or mixed usage. The choice by poets of more casual registers is one frequently made for lighter verse, such as love poetry (*dánta grádha*), grievances, etc., in addition to ballads or lays, as Professor Ó hUiginn noted in his study of the place of Duanaire Finn in the tradition of the *Fianaigheacht*.²⁷ The language associated with this tradition is summarised by Professor Ó hUiginn with reference to Duanaire Finn :

Maidir le teanga na laoihe i gcoitinne, tá meascán maith foirmeacha le sonrú iontu. Castar seanfhoirmeacha orainn arbh fhada imithe as an gcaint iad nuair a scríobhadh na dánta, m.sh. foraimneacha láir, foirmeacha áirithe briathartha, aidiachtaí fáisnéiseacha san uimhir iolra srl. Bhain cuid mhaith de na seanfhoirmeacha seo le teanga an bhairdne, ach tá teacht ar gnéithe ársa eile, m.sh. foirmeachaiolra den chopail, nár glacadh fíu sa chanúint liteartha sin ar leagadh síos a cuid rialacha sa 12ú haois. Lena n-ais siúd, áfach, tá go leor fianaise ar fhoirmeacha nua nár cheadmhach a úsáid i bhfilíocht na scol agus is léir a bhí i mbéal na ndaoine, m.sh. *do* a bheith in úsáid mar mhir choibhneasta, foirmeacha nua briathartha srl. Ina cheann sin, cinntíonn an mheadaracht in áiteanna go raibh fuaimniú 'nua' in úsáid nuair a bhí na laoihe seo á rá á gcanadh, m.sh. *Morna* a bheith ag déanamh comhardadh le *córa* (laoi iv, r.10) *oidhche* a bheith ag déanamh comhardadh le *Bhaoísgne* (laoi ix, r.2) srl.²⁸

One must be warned that archaising tendencies, although limited by the fact that the lays appear to have been intended for a popular audience who desired an intelligible narrative, are a feature of the genre. It must also be remembered that Ossianic composition was ongoing as late as the eighteenth century, and the skills of composing in that style did not die until very late, as has been noted above in chapter II, with the Irish exempla of 'Lá dhúinne ar Sliabh Fuaid,' 'Laoidh Oisín ar Thír na nÓg,' and 'Laoidh Cholainn gan Ceann,' and the Scottish works of the Rev. John Smith. It is clear that a scribe of the era of A or P could certainly fill a gap or rewrite a corrupt text, or introduce passages from other lays modified to fit, even adding episodes of their own composition. Professor Nagy has even suggested that poem XXI of the *Duanaire Finn* ('Cláidhtear leibh leabadh Osgair,' called 'The Battle of the Sheaves' by Mac

²⁷ Ó hUiginn, op. cit., p. 48-9.

²⁸ 'Ibid., pp. 52-3.

Neill,) is the composition of Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, the scribe of that section of the MS²⁹ ; the present author does not agree, although it very well may be that its disjointed structure arises from a scribal grafting of fragments. The differences between A and P in 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' demonstrate that one could not expect these scribes to pass on the texts exactly as they had gotten them. Among the differences is the tendency to replace linguistically difficult phrases when possible, thus erasing true signs of age, but to place minor archaisms and pseudoarchaisms all about as though to compensate with archaic flavouring. One may note the erratic and often incorrect spread of the preverb *ro-*, which is almost never in agreement among the MSS of lays consulted in this study, suggesting that scribes did as they pleased with it. The pseudoarchaic spellings such as *ph* for *bh*, which was never in fact correct, or of *cch* for *gh* are other such signs of tinkering. A sufficient number of these perverse kakographical usages are listed above under orthography, and a larger congeries will be noted throughout the editions and notes to them.

Dr. John Carey³⁰ has undertaken a most useful study on the criteria that Murphy used to date the poems of *Duanaire Finn*. His general points were illustrated by detailed evaluations of Murphy's commentary on three of the lays, none of which are foci of this study. The general result of his study is that Murphy, being somewhat uncertain in dating the poems erred on the side of caution and gave late dates, some of which should be pushed back significantly. There is a second tendency in Murphy, which is to compare his material to high register literature, as that was the corpus wherewith he was most familiar. Carey's study provides numerous examples where language features called 'Late Middle Irish' by Murphy are in fact common in *Saltair na Rann*, precisely dated by contents to A.D. 988. Carey's points will be discussed here in the description of Prof. Murphy's criteria of dating the poems.

Murphy's Criteria of Dating

Prof. Murphy enumerated and justified his criteria for dating the texts of the *Duanaire Finn* in the Introduction of vol. III, pp. cvii-cxvii. They are summarised as follows, with

²⁹ Joseph Nagy, 'The Significance of the *Duanaire Finn*,' *Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 47-8.

³⁰ John Carey, '*Duanaire Finn* : Remarks on Dating,' *Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 1-19. The time to have engaged this paper in depth for this discussion is entirely due to the kindness of Dr. Carey, who provided the author with a copy of his paper (as it was read at the fourth annual Irish Texts Society seminar at University College Cork, November 9th, 2002), a year prior to its publication.

notes on any more recent contributions to the point, especially those of Carey ; the headings are verbatim Murphy's. As the points are also numbered in the same fashion in the paragraphs of Carey's paper, it is redundant to footnote the paper directly for every one of his views cited here.

1. 'Inflexion of the copula' : Murphy says that the inflected plural copula goes from universal at 1100 to nonexistant by 1300. He also asserts that 'In the classical poetry inflected copulas do not occur.'³¹ Murphy is mistaken. McManus has listed exempla in his portion of *Stair na Gaeilge*.³² Furthermore, McKenna has noted in *Bardic Syntactical Tracts* that inflexion of the copula, whilst not mandatory to the classical poet, was taught as a metrical convenience within the category of *sealbhadh*, indicating that the copula inflexion was not considered by the grammarians as a set of verbal endings, but rather 'seems to have been regarded as copula with infixed pronoun' ; he gives a page of exempla.³³ Carey also notes that numerous scholars have found early examples of uninflected copulæ, including four in *Saltair na Rann*, concluding that the timescale for the degeneration of copula inflexion began a century before Murphy thought, and rendering it too long and slow a change to be more than a vague guide. This point has major ramifications for the dating of the poems of this study : a single instance of the copula uninflected for the plural in q. 48 is the major reason for Murphy's placing SF into the middle of the twelfth century ; uninflected copulæ are also noted as reasons for the dating of SC and CO, and two are noted in CC at qq. 50 and 57.³⁴

2. 'Inflexion of plural predicate adjective' : Murphy placed the decline of the inflexion of predicate adjectives on a gradual scale from 1100-1300, at the conclusion of which period such forms are found only as a metrical convenience in bardic poetry.³⁵ Carey notes that there are now tenth-century exempla, and that 'this is a usage which can scarcely be unknown in the eleventh century.'³⁶ Thus the criterion must open slightly to accommodate earlier dates.

Nevertheless, it is broadly correct.

³¹ *DF* III, p. cvii.

³² Damian MacManus, 'An Nua-Gaeilge Chlasaiceach,' *Stair na Gaeilge*, ed. McCone & al. (Maigh Nuad : Roinn na Sean-Ghacilge, Coláiste Phádraig, 1994), pp. 316-7.

³³ Lambert McKenna, *Bardic Syntactical Tracts* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1942), pp. 252-3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 43, 107.

³⁵ *DF* III, p. cvii & cviii-cix n. (1).

³⁶ Carey, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

3. 'Infix pronoun': The timescale here is 1100-1200 for the general switch from the infix pronominal direct object to the accusative independent pronoun, excepting the use for convenience in bardic texts. Carey again counters that the timescale is broader, citing an example of the independent object pronoun in Cinaed ua hArtucáin from the Leabhar Laighneach and another in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*.

4. 'Degenerate (pleonastic, meaningless, and relative) use of the infix pronoun': Murphy maintains that 'degenerate uses of the infix pronoun are most common about the middle of the twelfth century'.³⁷ Whilst he may be right, Carey notes that the usage of such infix pronouns is common enough in the eleventh century also. Furthermore, such uses go back all the way to the earliest Old Irish; McCone has noted the neuter third person singular infix pronoun is fossilised or used as a relative several times in the Würzburg glosses.³⁸ The disappearance of the meaningless infix pronoun is mostly linked to the waning use of the infix pronoun in general.

5. 'Analytic forms of the verb': Murphy notes that the earliest examples of which he knows are twelfth century ones from LL. He then states that thereafter there was a general increase, and that one finds that 'after the 13th century the proportion of analytic to non-analytic forms varies too much from district to district, and also from writer to writer, to permit its use as a criterion of date'.³⁹ No earlier examples of the analytic verbal forms have since been noted. One may also note, however, that in *ógláchas* it is often easy enough for a scribe to make the substitution, even where he must tinker with the line as a whole to make it fit; when lays in *DF* are compared to later MSS, one finds that analytic verbal forms multiply at the whim of the copyist. The presence of an analytic verbal form thus means far less than its absence. Carey made no comment on the point at all.

6. 'Special forms for the accusative case': Murphy once again gives the twelfth century as the timescale for the disappearance of the accusative, with some survival into the thirteenth. He observes that at the close of this period general use of the accusative ceases, but there is a striking divergence between normal usage and that of Classical verse: 'In the Gaelic Maundeville (1475) no special accusative forms occur. In Classical poetry, special forms are

³⁷ *DF* III, p. cix.

³⁸ McCone, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-8.

³⁹ *DF* III, p. cx.

almost always used.⁴⁰ Carey notes that Murphy, although he dismissed potential counterexamples to the proposed timescale found in LU as the work of H, a late interpolator, more examples of nominative/ accusative confusion are to be found in hand M. Furthermore, Murphy has again failed to realise that *Saltair na Rann*, as usual far more advanced than Murphy's timescale, contains plenty of tenth-century lost accusatives. An additional complication arises in that accusatives are easily removed by copyists, unless they have an additional syllable which is not easily provided to the line, or when then are fixed by rhyme. As Murphy realised in practice in his notes, *passim*, (although he did not state it in the listing of the criteria,) no weight can be placed on the lack of accusative forms that are not metrically fixed. A wider study of declensional tendencies in light verse could illuminate this dating criterion further.

7. 'The "tá... ina..." construction': Murphy places the development of this construction around the year 1200, thus placing texts containing it into the modern period. Murphy's view is contrary to the detailed dating studies developed by Ó Máille ; he accuses Ó Máille of having placed the dates of the most of the Middle Gaelic texts used too early, thereby distorting the chronology. Ó Máille's dates are not actually all that far from Murphy's, and certainly not unreasonable in general ; although a few should be pushed forward, none are worse than half a century from current views. (Among these texts that Nuner dated late are the *Leabhar Breac Passions and Homilies* and also *Agallamh na Seanórach*, both placed fifty years earlier than Murphy dated them.) Moreover, the texts that are dated a bit early for Murphy to accept are not the ones in question for the majority of the examples in part III of that article, which focuses exclusively on the *tá... ina* construction.⁴¹ Murphy made a similar attack against other examples later noted by Prof. Carney.⁴² Carey's reanalysis notes that Prof. Murphy's answers to Ó Máille and Carney do not address some of the examples ; he has also noted further examples of early use of the *tá... ina* construction in *Aislinge mac Con Glinne*. Carey rightly insists that Murphy was wrong to use this linguistic feature as a litmus test for placement in the modern period, although frequent employment of this verbal construction is

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ DF III, p. cxi ; Tomás Ó Máille, 'Contributions to the History of the Verbs of Existence in Irish', *Ériu* VI (1911) pp. 1-102 ; his dates for the major texts cited are pp. 1-2, the exempla of the *tá... ina* construction pp. 88-96. He anticipates and rebuts Murphy's objection to places where *in* means 'as' with examples from pp. 96-7. Even if one accepts Murphy's reclassification of the exempla he cites, there are still close to nine pages of exempla not rebutted.

⁴² DF III, pp. cxi-cxii n(2).

still to be regarded as a sign of lateness. In short, Murphy's attacks on this point are to be characterised more as dogmatic assertions rather than rational arguments.

8. 'Modern prepositional forms' : Murphy observed three significant changes : 1. From *dochum* to *com* to *chum*. The reduction first appears *circa* A.D. 1200, but the disyllabic *dochum* is the only one used in the Classical language (although generally avoided in *dán díreach*), and it thus survives into the seventeenth century. 2. The appearance of *faré*, 'with', first noted in the *Acallam*. 3. *Roimh*, replacing *ré/ria*, first noted in the thirteenth century, but forbidden in Classical verse. *DIL* confirms this point, and Carey finds that such counterexamples as have been posited are from later MSS or are scribal interference, making poetic lines hypersyllabic. Murphy here is on perfectly sound ground.

9. 'Modern verbal forms' : This section is comprised of three points : 1. *Raibh* for *raibhe*. Carey notes that the argument used by Murphy here is circular, for Murphy has no exempla of the form *raibh* from prior to the fifteenth century, except for the poems in *Duanaire Finn* which he has dated earlier on other grounds. Carey has since found one in the work of Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, ob. A.D. 1387.⁴³ 2. The spread of the second-person singular present/ subjunctive/ future ending *-(a)ir* into nondeponent verbs. Murphy cites the 'Homily on the Commandments' in the *Passions and Homilies* as the earliest instance. Carey notes that as a subjunctive ending, it is to be found in the *Leabhar Laighneach*, just slightly earlier, but he is 'unaware of any evidence that the ending had spread to the future in the Middle Irish period.' 3. The imperative *dén* for earlier *déna*. Murphy called *dén* 'unusual before the 17th century, and unclassical,' and thus a sign of extreme lateness.⁴⁴ Carey has confirmed Murphy's suspicions that the only potential counterexample was in fact a misprint. The discussion of these points, which is worthy of further analysis for the considering of *Duanaire Finn* as a whole, is of little direct importance to the poems in this study, and has been reduced to a sketch of the arguments only.

10. 'Relative use of "do" with primary tenses' : Carey notes that Murphy cites the earliest use of this syntax to the sixteenth century, but that it is now believed to be a century earlier in origin. There are plenty of examples to be found in the Book of the Dean of Lismore,

⁴³ In Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), p. 72, q. 6.

⁴⁴ *DF* III, p. cxiv.

as noted by Watson.⁴⁵ Dillon has noted a few earlier Irish exempla, and Breandán Ó Buachalla has outlined an historical chronology of the phenomenon.⁴⁶ This linguistic feature is not present in the texts considered in this study, but it does illuminate the methods that Murphy used to evaluate *Duanaire Finn*.

11. 'Other modernisms': They are: Elision of particles before vowels and *fh-*: the preverb *do*, vocative *a*, and masculine possessive *a*. Murphy notes that these are unclassical usages that occur in the Book of the Dean of Lismore and later. Carey had no quarrel with such a date.

12. 'Vocabulary': Murphy speaks in this section of the introduction, simply speaking of 'early' and 'late' vocabulary. He provides no examples, but from his notes to the poems it may be seen that the real use of this criterion was to find even single late words, especially Anglicisms, for use to stamp dates as late as possible on some poems without reflecting on the possibility of scribal substitution for obscure words. A single late word was enough for him to move a poem forward a century from what other criteria suggest, as the example of Carey's reanalysis of poem XIX demonstrates.

13. 'Rimes indicative of a modern pronunciation': Murphy is noting here several metrical phenomena. One group which he lumps into this category are simply those rhymes that are not good Middle Gaelic. Others are what Murphy has noted are not strictly Classical, although as the next section shews, he did not always take into account the liberties allowed in *ógláchas*. The phenomenon of *e : ea* and *eó : ó* rhyme is discussed below in depth under the section on metre. The remainders are examples of rhymes that arise from the silencing of medial aspirates causing compensatory lengthening. Murphy does not dwell on these, as he considers individual cases separately in the notes to the poems as they occur. Carey made no comment on this section in his paper.

Carey then looked at three poems from *DF* to see how his modifications of the dating criteria would compare to Murphy's dates. Poem XXXIII ('Sleep-Song for Diarmaid') was the first of these. Murphy dated it circa 1150. Carey notes that major reasons for the date were verbal forms: present 3s in *-ann*, future 1s in *-fat*, subjunctive 1s in *-ar*. There is an elision of *i n-a*, which, it is noted above, is common in *Saltair na Rann*. One of the failed rhymes (12d)

⁴⁵ William Watson, *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1937), pp. xxii-xxiii.

⁴⁶ Myles Dillon, 'History of the preverb *to*,' Éigse X (1961), pp. 123-4; Breandán Ó Buachalla, 'The Relative Particle *Do*,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XXIX (1961), pp. 107-10.

is a dative plural with a preposition that requires the accusative. Emendation to the accusative plural, Carey notes, restores the rhyme. He concludes :

I do not see how a date later than the eleventh century can be asserted for this poem. Even a date at the end of the tenth century cannot be entirely excluded. I may provisionally add that a preliminary look at the other poems which Murphy assigned to the twelfth century suggests that the possibility of similarly early dates may exist in the case of many, if not most, of these as well.⁴⁷

Poem XIX ('Lament for the Fian) is placed in the thirteenth century by Murphy.⁴⁸ The reason for the date is primarily due to two independent pronouns, which are made too late a development in Murphy's dating scheme, as has been shewn above. It is more important to Carey that *accath Breghdha* (q. 5d) is better divided as *ag Áth Breä* than Mac Neill's *a cCath Breaghdha*. As a disyllabic *Bóüinn* is found also in that line, two hiäus forms suggest that the poem is twelfth-century indeed, and that some of the minor late forms discussed by Murphy and Carey are likely due to corruption. In this case, the professors agree. Poem LIII ('The Bell on Druim Deirg') is the last example in Carey's paper. Murphy dates it to the fifteenth century, and Carey agrees with the date, which is based on post-Classical verbal forms and the word *foraois*, which is the English word 'forest.' The details of such late developments are not of concern in dating any of the lays in this study.

The antecedent probability from Carey's exercise is that one will find that the dates of at least some of these poems may well be earlier than those which Murphy gave them. At the same time, Murphy is proven an excellent judge based on the information that he had, and a good judge still by the standards of to-day. The only tendency revealed is that when he was uncertain, Murphy always chose to err on the side of lateness, both in setting his criteria and in applying them. Yet these criteria, slightly modified, remain very much reasonable, especially when used as a relative dating for the development of the cycle of lays, rather than for absolute dating attempts beyond an error margin of a half-century. One may attempt to push the texts back further, or even forward for that matter, but the wider philological ground has turned to bog in which heavier speculations must sink by their own weight.

Revised Dates of the Poems

It has thus been seen that although there are some texts of definite absolute dates known

⁴⁷ Carey, op.cit., p. 11.

⁴⁸ *DF* III, p. 42.

on grounds other than linguistic forms, one cannot arrive at an absolute date of composition for undated texts by analysis of the proportion of linguistic forms changing between two such texts with known dates of composition, because personal tendencies of authors or scribes, differences of register and intent of text, and other such considerations create irresolvable complications. There is the further problem, noted above, of modernisation of texts found in later MSS. One can no longer take the dates that were assigned by Murphy in an absolute sense, but as an abstracted measure of the tendencies of texts to reflect known earlier or later texts in their use of language, they remain a useful means of describing changes in the language. Thus a text described as ca. 1100 is a way of saying that its language is approximately halfway between the *Saltair na Rann* and early Classical texts. Using the timescale of Murphy for convenience of comparison with his conclusions, although with the recognition that the dates are an abstraction a step removed from any actual progression of years, it now remains to reëxamine the dating of the poems from *Duanaire Finn* and from P in the light of the advances of the last seventy years. The differences in the recensions of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' also provide a tool for further analysis by highlighting modernisation in *Duanaire Finn*, but it must be remembered that it is also heavily modernised, albeit differently. The statements regarding the language of the poems which follow here are summaries ; the actual evidence is presented in full after at the conclusion of each of the editions in Part II.

Regarding 'Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga,' Murphy's date of 1200 seems roughly correct. The vocabulary contains some good Middle Gaelic words and expressions, and well preserved accusatives. The verbal system seems rather chaotic from the glimpse of the eighteen extant quatrains and is not to Classical standards. One example of the early 'as' form of the *tá... ina* construction occurs. One may potentially push back the date by a quarter century or so because one of the major points for a later date that Murphy argued was based on a copula and predicate adjective in q. 14b – a line which he failed to note was hypersyllabic – and thus a probable victim of scribal interference in a poem where the metre suffers no other such lapses.

'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn' is likewise probably likely earlier than Murphy suggests. He noted the hiatus forms and archaic words ; modern research tools have shewn him correct. Apart from the verbal form *tarroidh*, which is found twice in places where one would expect a deuterotonic form, there is a tendency to preserve older forms, including the deponent *do-fhidir*, several deuterotonic preterite forms of varying quality from *-bheir* compounds, several disyllabic copulæ, and an infixed pronoun complex. Overall, the verbal system is more archaic

than that in the lays of the Leabhar Laighneach. Therefore, it appears that the date in the middle of the twelfth century that Murphy gave is conservative, on linguistic grounds ; the limit to how early it is, is better defined by content, which still does leave it in the vicinity of 1100.

'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' is the most interesting of the lays to reanalyse, as the full comparison to the recension in P allows for a second chance for more archaic forms to survive. P has material not found in A, and a very independent descent from Ω , as the stemma in the General Introduction to Part II describes. In actuality, only four significant older verbs survive, *do-rochair*, *con(g)mhaidh*, *ot-chiú-sa*, and preserved hiatus in the preterite *faoiís*. Most of the difference in vocabulary is in chevilles and changed adjectives, and nothing significant is to be found. Some minor modernisms from A give way to older phrasings in P, but overall, the language of P is more progressive than that of A, and one would be likely to give a later date to the lay if working on the evidence of P alone, (for the poem is in general more progressive than the tendencies of the scribe of P that are seen elsewhere in that *Agallamh*, as was seen above in the look at three recensions of the 'Lay of the Headless Phantoms'). The two significant modernisms of *iná é* for *inás* and an example of the *tá... ina* construction in its fully developed form are confirmed by all MSS. Murphy's overreaction regarding the latter is reason to think his date may be slightly late, as is the case with many of the lays. The comparison of the recensions (vid. the edition commentary in Part II) has confirmed that the judgement was reasonable enough and supplied surprisingly little new linguistic evidence. The minor adjustment is to draw the date back from ca. 1200 again by a quarter century.

'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair' is the most problematic of the lays to date. The list of old or notable linguistic forms in the edition is immense, but they are mixed with later forms and incorrect forms. The old preterite *do luidh* is one of the most common verbs, but a simple attempt to make it plural (q. 77a) results in an s-preterite modernism, *luidhsiot*. There are many good signs of age, such as the use of disyllabic copula forms more frequently than the monosyllabic counterparts and a large body of words not common enough to be used as pseudoarchaisms, yet extinct or changed before the Classical period — such as *diondgna*, which had a shift of meanings, or the older form of the interrogative, *cuich*. Many others may be found in the commentaries accompanying the editions in part II. On the other hand, there are numerous nominatives used in place of accusatives, often fixed by rhyme, and also independent accusative pronouns. The poem violates many rules, but it is altogether a lighter

poem than the other texts. Elements of satire of the heroic and Classical tales are to be found throughout. One of the characters bears the appellation Lomnochtach, 'Starkers.' The useless warriors flee at the hint of conflict, making a joke of the watchman motif at qq. 63-65, using the same Ulster warriors who are outdone in *Fled Bricrend*. Puns are made twice (qq. 3 and 16).⁴⁹ It is unsurprising that a humorous tale, adorned with scraps of overblown language, is (by bardic standards) very casual in its attitudes to declensions, rhyme, etc. There are certainly more signs of lateness than in the other poems. But the amount of close contact with heroic literature needed to produce such a work suggests a date close to 1200, as that was close to the height of activity in copying the Ulster cycle and translating the classics, would be reasonable.

'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' has a remarkably good level of preservation of Middle Gaelic verbal forms and a spread of fully used and otherwise employed infix pronouns that are characteristic of the linguistic upheavals of the Middle Gaelic verbal system. There are a significant number of deponent-derived verbal endings which would rule out a very early date. CC also features significant use of precise legal terminology and procedure in a learned fashion. It is almost unquestionably a work of the twelfth century. It has unfortunately suffered badly in transmission ; as the text appears in the MS no fewer than ten lines do not preserve syllable count in a poem of only 59 qq., and there are further faults and signs of scribal patching of the text. It is impossible to be more precise ; Murphy's judgement, to place it somewhere in the middle of the twelfth century, was good.

(c) Metre

It is to be noted that Prof. Murphy's remarks on the metres of the poems of *DF* which he made in vol. III are the rather harsh reflection of a scholar of much older Gaelic who evidently felt that looser forms of the metres were either 'corrupt' or decadent and unprofessional. He spent little effort in describing what he must have felt were unremarkable metrics, which has led to numerous omissions of points of interest. It is also notable that no remarks were made about the place of the metres used within the tradition, which oversight is here addressed.

The metre of the poems of this study are the most common syllabic metre of older Gaelic poetry, *deibhidhe*, with a few, probably interpolated, quatrains in *rannaigheacht*, the

⁴⁹ Vid. ch. IX for full discussion of these motifs.

next most common metre, found in 'Cloidheamh Oscair'.⁵⁰ The poems considered here, like the majority of the poems in A, P, and the larger part of the wider tradition of Ossianic verse are also in the tradition of *ógláchas*, which is the looser form of the bardic syllabic metres, as compared to the stricter *dán díreach*, which is considered by many scholars as the standard against which verse is measured. Prof. Knott summarises what is permissible in *ógláchas ar deibhidhe* beyond the possibilities in *dán díreach* :

In the *ógláchas* style the end-words of one couplet are often of the same syllabic length, on the other hand, the *airdrinn* rime may exceed the *rinn* by two syllables instead of one, as *de : fáisdine* ; there are no rules of alliteration.⁵¹

The differences for *ógláchas ar rannaigheacht* are similar:

[I]t will be noticed that the rimes are often imperfect, and the only ones are those between *b* and *d*, and between the finals of *ac* with words in the interior of *bd* respectively. Alliteration is unnecessary.⁵²

The lack of formal requirement of alliteration is unquestionable, but it should be noted that alliteration is used very frequently as ornament, especially in strings of adjectives. There is alliteration of stressed words in the lines of the lays as often as there is not. It is simply that the poets did not feel themselves bound to alliterate constantly in the manner that they did in strict metre when it interfered with the relation of the tale in natural language.

Murphy viewed *ógláchas* with an evidently low regard. In his work on mediæval Irish metres, Murphy never mentions the looser *ógláchas* at all.⁵³ In the whole of *DF III*'s discussions of the metres of the poems, he uses the word twice. Both times that it is used, it is used pejoratively. In the discussion of the metre of lay IV, the phrase is 'The rimes in the present poem, especially the three-syllabled rimes, are the imperfect rimes of *ógláchas* poetry, not the rimes of *dán díreach*'.⁵⁴ The second is a nearly sneering reference in a comparison to

⁵⁰ For a brief description syllabic verse and the characteristics of its subdivisions, cf. Eleanor Knott, *Irish Syllabic Poetry, 1200-1600*, 3rd. revised ed. (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), pp. 1-20, although she focuses on the Classical language as her standard. For an in-depth description focused on Middle Gaelic, cf. Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1961), especially chapters VI and VII, pp. 26-45.

⁵¹ Knott, op. cit., p.19.

⁵² Ibid. p. 14.

⁵³ Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics*.

⁵⁴ *DF III*, p. 12.

'faulty rimes... such as are common in 17th century ógláchas poems.'⁵⁵ The term is not defined in the introduction, nor used apart from these criticisms, although it could rightly refer to each and every poem in *Duanaire Finn*. The root of Murphy's attitude is clear. He begins by dismissing Fenian prose as far less than good literature and deeply flawed. Then he moves to the poetry, saying that the poems were the right direction for the tradition, although he believed that their quality was highly variant, and they generally had what might be termed a folksy charm.⁵⁶ The section on metre that follows is merely about the oral pronunciation of stress, with little noted about crafting the verse or its complexities ; the section on the literary contents and themes is full of description of how people love dog stories or lovely scenes in nature. In short, Murphy fails to praise the poems as literature, but rather as treacly and maudlin songs. He concludes the exempla with lines on harvest from the 'Battle of the Sheaves' (lay XXI), and a rhetorical question : 'Are not those the lines of a farmer poet who from an art nourished by experience could call up realistic images of harvesters at work?' The peroration to the section thereafter jumps back from the judgement, calling all the poems 'dignified in metre, and direct and idiomatic in their language.'⁵⁷ Murphy has given himself away : to him, loose metre is as good as could be expected from farmer-poets. One cannot help but feel that a man who spent so much time analysing the most difficult *rosc* of Old Irish feels let down by the simplicity of form. The current consensus does not, however, agree with Murphy's theory of farmer-poet amateurs (who seem closer indeed to the thought patterns of Prof. Corkery's portrayals of dispossessed poets of eighteenth-century Ireland in *The Hidden Ireland*⁵⁸ than any known type of mediæval poet).

A more modern view is that of Prof. Ó hUiginn, who belived that the choice of looser medium tells little about the poet :

[I]s iad na filí a chleachtadh an dán díreach agus iad ag cumadh a gcuid filíochta poiblí, marbhnaíthe, dánta molta, dánta ócáide, aortha agus eile. An aiste ógláchais ba rogha leo féin agus le filí eile nach iad ag cumadh dánta grá, iomchasoidí agus dánta beaga eile, leithéid a bhfuil curtha i dtoll a chéile in *Measgra Dánta, Dánta Grá* srl. I mórchuid cásanna, mar sin, bhí baint ag meadaracht an dáin lena aicme.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 122.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. lxxxviii.

⁵⁷ *DF* III, p. cvi.

⁵⁸ Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland* (Dublin : E.H. Gill, 1924).

⁵⁹ Ó hUiginn, op.cit., p. 49.

As the analysis throughout this study should make more than clear, the sophisticated literary allusions and learned references in these poems are undoubtedly the work of a trained professional poet, an educated man of the *aes dána*. Virgilian references and use of synthetic history and the cycles of learned Gaelic literature are simply not the work of twelfth-century (or thereabouts) ploughmen, even if such should have had the tool of literacy in an age of such restricted education.

The discussion of the *ógláchas ar deibhidhe* of these poems has focused on rhyme. There is little to say about the count of seven syllable lines, (the standard for verse narrative,) except when one is noting a hiatus form, elision, or using an incorrect count as evidence for corruption. It has been noted above that the tradition of *ógláchas* did not prescribe the use of metrical ornaments. The lack of requirement does not imply that they are not present. Alliterative epithets abound in all the lays, and ornamental *aicill* is not uncommon ; (it is usual in 'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn'). These ornaments, which undoubtedly add to the grace of the lays and attest the skills of their poets, are not analysed in depth here, as they are not connected directly to the metre in a way that fixes words as rhyme does,⁶⁰ nor historically changing in a manner that aids the dating of the poems. It suffices to say that the taste of the poets is demonstrated by a judicious and euphonious employment of ornament.

Another point regarding these metres is the development of rhyme. The bardic rules for Classical *dán díreach* are simple enough and well known, having been printed in any number of places.⁶¹ Despite the points that Ó Cuív has clarified in many of his articles, there has never been a comprehensive study of the relative changes from Middle Gaelic standards to Classical, or any inquiry into whether it was a process over time or a sudden revolution. All one can do to evaluate Murphy's standards is to collect the scattered comments containing them, as he never lays them out in a systematic fashion, either in his commentary in *DF* III or elaborates beyond a brief summary in *Early Irish Metrics*. He provides a note on rhyming unstressed short and long vowels in Middle Gaelic.⁶² The introduction of *a : ea* rhyme is not, in Prof.

⁶⁰ E.g. 'Iobhair in áird-ríogh,' SCA 15d versus 'Iobhair an-ghloinnaigh,' SCP 14d.

⁶¹ Ex. Knott, op. cit., pp. 4-9 ; Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics*, pp. 28-33 ; Cáit Ní Dhomhnaill, *Duanaireacht* (Baile Átha Cliath : Oifig an tSoláthair, 1975), pp. 24-30 and her discussion of consonantal qualities with numerous examples from *IGT*, pp 14-22.

⁶² *DF* III, p. 39 note.

Murphy's experience, in Middle Gaelic, but is found in classical poetry.⁶³ His scattered comments on rhymes that he notes 'would have been permitted even in strict *dán díreach* in the Middle Irish period' e.g. *oibre : loige* SF 15, demonstrate that Prof. Murphy held that the rules for rhyming consonant clusters took longer to form than the general rhyme by consonant classification.⁶⁴ A vague description of the phenomenon may be found in *Early Irish Metrics*, p. 33.

The rhyme schemes in these lays also have a very large percentage of that are exact to the standards of English rhyme ; CO is particularly rich in these rhymes. (E.g. CO q. 79 *mbúaidh: crúaidh*, q. 83 *dhúin : rúin*, q. 112 *cosgar : hOsgar*, &c.) A few cases as extreme as self-rhyme are found. Such rhymes are certainly not present in large quantities in Classical verse, or indeed in *dán díreach* of any period. In a comparison of early and late metrical patterns, David Sproule suggests that the almost total lack of over-exact rhymes in bardic poems – except for a handful that are notoriously rich in them, which comprise the glaring exception – likely is because such rhymes were 'regarded as bad taste.'⁶⁵ Sproule is analysing the Old Gaelic period mostly, and does not look into the *Irish Grammatical Tracts*. These forbid some of these types of rhyme specifically, such as synonymous compounds (Sect. V, § 28). *Caichi*, 'one-eyed,' faults §§ 108-16 also formulate rules against self-rhyme, self-alliteration, self-consonance, or the use of close compounds in the forementioned ways. Fault § 97 *Imarcraidh*, i.e. 'excess,' is more of a catch-all than a precisely phrased rule of limits for jingling language ; it is the mediæval formulation of Sproule's rule of taste. Over-closeness of rhyme thus is not specifically forbidden as such, so long as it is not self-rhyme and kept within tasteful limits. There is nothing explaining how closely bound a poet of *ógláchas* would have been, and these lays suggest that he may have had a good deal more freedom than was permitted in Classical *dán díreach*. It is also interesting that these overly close rhymes are most often found in couplets of *deibhidhe ghuilbneach*. It would be interesting to know more about precisely in which parts of the *ógláchas* tradition beyond the *laoithe fianagheachta* these patterns prevail.

Thus, although a reëvaluation of the metrical peculiarities of these lays may tell

⁶³ Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁴ E.g., *ibid.*, p. 34 ; a view represented *passim*.

⁶⁵ David Sproule, 'Complex Alliteration, Full and Stressed Rhyme, and the Origin of *Deibide*,' *Ériu* XXXVIII (1987), p. 195.

something more about their literary background from the point of the history of literature, little can be expected in terms of metrical dating of the texts, as there have been no significant advances in the relative chronology of metrical evolution since Murphy's time.

Since Murphy thought nothing higher of the metres used in any of the *Duanaire Finn* poems than that they were appropriate to the subject, he failed to scrutinise the metrical points closely, and missed a fair number of licenses, problems, and other points worth noting ; these are outlined below along with a general statement of the metrical type and characteristics of each poem analysed here. As the few lines of incorrect count are more likely to be the result of scribal error or textual corruption than compositional flaws, the few examples are not listed here. They are clearly indicated by (.l.) in the editions, with footnotes to explain any emendations undertaken to correct them.

Further Metrical Notes on the Texts

'Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga' is a *deibhidhe* of 7 syllable lines in which a substantial number of the first couplets of quatrains are of the *ghuilebneach* subcategory rather than the *scaoilte* type,⁶⁶ e.g. q. 3a,b (*corr : nglond*), whilst others are not, e.g. 1a,b (*rinn : airdrinn* of *Chaoilte : n-iomlaoíte*). The *deibhidhe* of this poem is fairly strict. Except in opening *deibhidhe ghuilebneach* couplets the *rinn/ airdrinn* is $x : x+1$, and the poet never uses the license of *ógláchas* to use $x : x+2$. Some of the rhymes are looser, but none are forbidden in Middle Gaelic or in the Classical language. There are no metrical oddities in CB.

'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn' is similar *deibhidhe*, except $x : x+2$ is used betimes. Both couplets of q. 36 and c,d of q. 40 are *deibhidhe ghuilebneach* ; both couplets end in *in scíath sin*. As a whole, the rhymes confirm to Middle Gaelic standards for *dán díreach*. Murphy has also noted that most quatrains are adorned with an internal rhyme in the second couplet.⁶⁷

'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' in both recensions is a looser *ógláchas*, availing itself of frequent $x/ x+2$ rhymes in addition to frequent opening couplets of *deibhidhe ghuilebneach*. In 'Sítheal Chaoilti' recension A, as Murphy saw,⁶⁸ qq. 11, 44 – an error, as it is 43 that is clearly described and should be noted as having the odd metrical pattern – and 116, the first couplets

⁶⁶ I.e. dispense with the usual *rinn : airdrinn* correspondence and rhyme words of equal length.

⁶⁷ *DF* III, p. 34.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

are in ordinary *deibhidhe*, but the second are in *deibhidhe ghuilbneach*. Murphy did not note that such a pattern is found also in qq. 17, 39, 72, and 86, all of which have two couplets of the *guilbneach*. In the recension from P, the same happens in qq. 10 (=A q. 11), 21 (=A q. 17), 42 (=A q. 39), 45 (=A q. 43), 73 (=A q. 71). P q. 120 (=A q. 116) is faulty, attempting to use the impermissible form *síthile*, giving the line 8 syllables in the MS ; the natural emendation is to the text as in A. In P q. 49, there is an additional occurrence which is the result of having only the second half of the compound *trom-olc* in A q. 46d. One more example is to be found at q. 68, which has no parallel in A. Thus both recensions, apart from the quatrain of P q. 46, not found in A at all, match in lines of metrical oddities, which thus strengthen the premise that these oddities were present in the original form of the lay, rather than being the result of scribal rephrasing. The rhymes are good, although one or two have the look of a scribal patch.

'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair' has the same type of metre as the preceding poems. As Murphy notes, the rhymes are good by the Classical rules, with the notable additional 'licence by which stressed *eó* and *ea* rime with stressed *ó* and *a* (e.g. *beó* : *gó*, *Samhna* : *hEmhna*, 28, 59)' and additionally at 69 and 108 ; Murphy believed this practice to be early Classical rather than Middle Gaelic, and that belief appears to have been used in dating lays ; no one else has placed the development quite so late.⁶⁹ Prof. Liam Breatnach has found earlier examples from Leabhear Laighneach, noted in *Stair na Gaeilge*.⁷⁰ An additional occurrence at 27 (*mhóide* : *Thréoide*) was not noted. X : x+2 rhymes are very frequent. Q. 3, 10, 49, 109 have both couplets in *deibhidhe ghuilbneach* ; only couplet c,d is *guilbneach* in q. 58. Also note that qq. 39c,d and 40 are in *rannaigheacht*; if the final word of 39c that Murphy considered 'obscure' in his note on p. 46, *teachtaidh*, is from modern Irish pronunciation for *téachtaidhe* (which would be unmetrical), then it is likely to be a scribal patch to a defective portion of the text.

'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' is of the same general type with middle Gaelic type rhymes. As Prof. Murphy has noted, q. 59 ends oddly with a couplet of *deibhidhe ghuilbneach*

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁷⁰ Dr. Carey, op.cit., p. 13, notes that Liam Breatnach has found more examples, which he relegates to a footnote: 'S[tair na] G[aeilge], p. 233: the rhymes are *fhórcoméot* : *rót* (LL 28138), *héoin* : *ardmóir* (ibid. 28349), *caelmuneol* : *mór* (ibid. 29214). Thurneysen gave it as his opinion that the poem in which the first of these occurs is 'schwerlich älter... als das 12. Jahrhundert' ([Die irische] Helden- [und König]sage [bis zum 17. Jahrhundert (Halle]: Max Niemeyer, 1921], p. 501).

holding the *dúnadh*.⁷¹ Murphy does not merely note that the quatrain is odd, (although from the length of the lists of similar quatrains with a second couplet of *deibhidhe ghuilbneach* that are found in these poems, one might think it less so), but he uses it to suggest that the poem lacks its original ending, and broke off incomplete at q. 53. It appears that at minimum there is significant rewriting of the section. Other examples of *deibhidhe ghuilbneach* in the poem are found at 11 and 44. The poem is fairly loose in general, having several usages of the looser x : x+2 rhyme. The high number of faulty lines in the poem (usually hypersyllabic in a fashion not caused by poets' technical errors) suggest significant degeneration of the text and raise the possibility that some of the liberties in the current text may not be original.

Conclusions on Metre

The loose *deibhidhe* metres of these poems are common throughout the period of syllabic verse. One may see metrical usage in these poems which hovers between Middle and Classical Gaelic norms, but the distinctions are blurred, because the looser rules of *ógláchas* do not confine the poets of these lays in the time-specific fashion that the development of Classical *dán díreach* did. It can be said that as a whole the poems are written in a competent manner, with a fairly traditional choice of metre and full knowledge of the rules for its use. To regard the poems as lighter bardic compositions is, between construction and content, the most likely possibility.

The evolution of the rules of rhyme has, unfortunately, not been the subject of a comprehensive study. Seventy years after Murphy wrote notes that some of the patterns looked rather 'early' or 'late,' there has been no research into the evolution of the rules of rhyme or even the standards of *dán díreach*. A study of rhymes in the corpus of syllabic verse with known dates from the late Old Gaelic period through to the collapse of the bardic schools is thus one more desideratum which could help to date these poems and say more about the register of the language. It is far beyond the scope of this enquiry, and should be added to the list of numerous monumental tasks that are unlikely to be started for decades.

⁷¹ DF III, p. 108.

V : The Relic Lay

(a) Relic Lays

In the most obvious manner, all of the relic lays use the same device within their plot structures. The tradition of constructing Fenian texts in the form of S. Patrick and either Caoilte or Oisín in conversation was certainly established by the twelfth century as the main context for the preservation of Ossianic and other Fenian material (as chapter II demonstrates), even though its nearly total dominance as a template of the Early Modern had not yet replaced all other models. Thus each of the lays has a frame of dialogue with the Fenian survivors, aged and lamenting, and the learned tale is presented as a narration of one of the participants. A majority of Fenian lays use this simple device. The relic lays have the further point of using the presence of the relic object in the frame dialogue to link the aged *féinidh* with his past and give him cause for his reminiscences.

Each of the lays in this study begins the discussion with some combination of reference to an object at hand, apostrophe of it, and ekphrasis of it by one of the conversants. The item then invites a recitation of some aspect the history of the object : how or why it was made, who had owned it, or how it came into the possession of the Fenian warriors. The closing return of the frame serves as a literary device to remind the audience of the preservation of the knowledge through the transfer of it from the ancient speaker to the literary and learned tradition.

The literary device is clearly a major part of the structural concern of the author. Such devices are universal. One may point towards famous exempla such as Virgil's grand ekphrasis of the shield of Æneas,¹ which acts as a means of inserting a thumbnail sketch of Roman history into the epic as a reminder that the glories of Rome are at stake in the battles of Æneas ; Æneas is 'attollens umero famaque et fata nepotem.'² The changing descriptions of the alternately blest and curst tablets whereby Ovid communicated with his lover, framing incidents of their affair, provide a more lighthearted ancient example.³ It is not unlikely that these examples and other ancient ones were known to mediæval authors of the lays, but proof is not forthcoming in the texts of these lays, nor is it necessary that such borrowing, direct or

¹ *Æneid* VIII, ll. 608 ad fin.

² *Ibid.*, l. 731.

³ Ovid, *Amores* I, poems xi, xii.

indirect, did in fact occur.

Earlier than the relic lays, the literary device of linking the story, frame, and audience through the presence of an object is attested in prose tales. The Irish voyage tales often present a physical 'proof' of the journey in the form of a token said to be preserved ; whether or not the objects ever existed outside of the text is unknown. One such tale is the 'Voyage of Mael Dúin,' where Diuran Leicerd takes, against the wishes of Mael Dúin, a section of a wondrous silver net that is encountered on the voyage.⁴ In the final paragraph of the tale, this net is recalled, and it is asserted that it was left as an offering on the altar at Armagh, as Diuran had promised Mael Dúin, where it remains.⁵ Another piece of the very same net – 'roconnuic Mael Duin inní cétna,' by the Uí Corra is taken as evidence of the truth of the tale in 'The Voyage of the Huí Corra.'⁶ Another close relation of the relic lays regarding the literary use of the object is a part of 'The Colloquy of Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' whose formal similarities to the Fenian lays has already been discussed. One of its smaller episodes has an otherworldly visitor deliver a branch fruiting with a nut, sloe, and apple. The motif of the magical branch is very common in Gaelic literature, but it is usually not an enduring object. Yet the branch, through its fruits in Fionntan's 'Colloquy,' does endure. The places where each of these three things is planted takes its name from the story, and it is implied that one can check the veracity of Fionntan's tale by finding the actual trees that grew from them in the places named.⁷ The story is placed not only into the landscape as a *dinnshenchas*, but also makes a claim to a physical presence in the world beyond the text.

The shield of Æneas belongs to an epic past rather than the physical reality of the world of the audience ; it is purely a literary device. In contrast, the closing tokens in Irish voyage-tales and other such stories, including the fruits of magical branch of Fionntan, survive in some form. Thus, such tales bring the tale, at least in its own assertion, into the physical world of the audience, thereby linking story and audience. The relic lays do not. They bring the object into the post-heroic world of Patrick and the aged Oisín and Caoilte, but they do not attempt to bring the item into the world of the audience ; the disconnect serves as a sharp reminder of the gulf between the heroic age and that of the audience. Yet there is also some amount of

⁴ Whitley Stokes, 'The Voyage of Mael Dúin,' part I, *Révue Celtique* IX (1888), § 26, pp. 60-3.

⁵ Whitley Stokes, 'The Voyage of Mael Dúin,' part II, *Révue Celtique* X (1889), pp. 94-5.

⁶ Whitley Stokes, 'The Voyage of the Huí Corra,' *Révue Celtique* XIV (1893), § 51 pp. 44-5.

⁷ Kuno Meyer, ed. 'The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, edd. O.J. Bergin & al. (Halle : Max Niemeyer, 1907), vol. I, pp. 24-39, qq. 64-85.

connexion, for the objects become symbols of the values of the old order, the Fenians, taken into the new, Christian world. The nature of the objects themselves, beyond their function as a simple literary device in the plot structure, must therefore be explored at greater length here.

It cannot be attempted in this study to consider the relics of the relic lays as real objects which could be shewn by the reciter or his original patron like the famous Round Table of King Arthur at Winchester. In fact, these Fenian relics around which the texts focus are generally destroyed or useless at the end of the lay. Furthermore, it is sometimes unclear whether the objects are present to the narrator in the text, or whether they are only the subject of that episode of the ongoing colloquy as a reminiscence. Although the objects have a literary function as an introductory device, it is immediately clear from the texts of the lays that the objects are intended to be seen primarily as symbols.

The term 'relic lay,' a coinage of the author's, arose from an initial hypothesis that the *reliquiae Ossianicae* which are the foci of the texts in this study, are paralleled in the theology associated with the physical presence of relics of the Saints in Catholic theology. The lives of the Saints in Gaelic and the insular Latin of the Celtic countries do not make much ado about primary relics, although the visiting of a tomb is occasionally mentioned. The annals record several translations of Colum Cille and of Patrick, but these are movings of the whole shrine to ensure its safety. Secondary relics are nevertheless well attested. The national musæa of Ireland and Scotland are certainly not lacking in shrines of book, bell, and crosier, often shewing the encrustation of centuries of addition onto the reliquaries, from before the Viking era until the Stripping of the Altars. These objects are related in one important respect, that they are all items relating to the duties of a cleric which are symbols of his authority. The books which have been enshrined, such as the Cathach of Colum Cille, are either psalters, used in the office, and thus a sign of personal holiness ; or they are Gospels, the Word of God that must be preached, the primary physical weapon in the battle for the salvation of souls. (And also a weapon in battle, carried like the Ark of the Covenant, as the later career of the Cathach exemplifies.) Books also are signs of learning, and thus of authority in a culture where literacy is not widespread. The bell is used to call the faithful to prayer, and easily symbolises the place of the cleric at the head of a congregation. Bells are also used in the liturgy to bring important points to attention of the congregation, who would not understand the Latin wherein worship is conducted. Crosiers are the most direct signs of the authority of bishops.

A wading through mediæval literature in Gaelic confirms that the more abstract

theological concerns of the relic were not discussed widely, although there is no evidence to suggest the absence of such theological texts, which would be part of a well-attested universal mediæval phenomenon. Hagiography is in general surprisingly silent on the subject of relics,⁸ and theological treatises on them do not survive from the Celtic countries. The homilies in the *Leabhar Breac* do not make mention of relics.⁹ Yet the annals do mention them frequently. In summary, the lack of more developed texts regarding relics is surprising, for despite the violence of altar-strippers in both Scotland and Ireland, relics of the types mentioned above survive in relatively large numbers, and there are mentions in the annals of a few other such relics.

For the context of these relic lays, the slightest glance at the texts easily establishes that they have little or no overlap with theological concerns which are evidenced in ecclesiastical literature of that period. Nor are there significant Biblical parallels in their plots or contents. That the tradition of book, bell, and crosier is intended is nevertheless unquestionable ; it is directly stated in 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' that the dipper is to be refashioned into those very items: 'Níamhochthar bachla bána, is cluig agas ceolána/ ocus soisgéla sgríobhtha [P snímhce] d'ór is d'airgead na síothla.'¹⁰ The variation in P suggests the stories of the indestructible Word such as S. Ronán's Gospel in *Buile Shuibhne*, which returns dry in the mouth of an otter, when tossed into a loch by the enraged Suibhne.¹¹ The inclusion of crosiers is also important, for one of the items which makes multiple appearances in the annals is the crosier of S. Patrick himself, and a second is his bell. These relics will be discussed in the analysis of the poem in chapter VIII.

The power of the Fenian warriors is signified in these poems by these objects – symbols of power and sovereignty, with items parallel to those that symbolised the power of the Church, and which are used by the Church for her own ends upon acquisition, including the fashioning of the very symbols of the Church's power.

It is also of note that the last theme of the tradition of the relic is the collection of quatrains on the *Bratacha na Féine* that are found in lay XVI of the Book of the Dean, as a lay

⁸ The notable exception, the *Vita Tripartita*, is analysed further below regarding the book, bell, and crosier of S. Patrick in chapter VIII.

⁹ Robert Atkinson, ed., *The Passions and the Homilies from Leabhar Breac: Text, translation, and glossary* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1887).

¹⁰ SCA, q. 116 ; SCP q. 120.

¹¹ Cf. note *e* to the SCP edition.

in M`Callum's collection of lays, as an interpolation in the 'Laoidh Maghnuis,' and elsewhere ; another set of banner quatrains is in Duanaire Finn lay LXVI. These objects are a bridge from the Fenian past to the present in a different way. The banners were more than simply symbols of the warriors carried into battle. It would not appear unreasonable to approach these quatrains with the hypothesis that they came to represent the renewability of the Ossianic tradition (especially in Scotland) and allow one to lift the banner figuratively for the tradition. J.C.M. Campbell did so when he sang 'Brataichean na Féinne' from the concert platform to promote the living tradition of the lays in the early twentieth century.¹²

Professor Meek has a more sophisticated interpretation of the banners, which takes the symbols to a deeper level. The banners are seen as reflective of the heraldic tradition of the High Middle Ages with Norman symbolism assimilated, although a possibly earlier germ of the tradition of Fenian banners from Anglo-Saxon or Viking banners is also regarded as likely. Some other mediæval Irish banners depict and are named after holy relics for use in battle, so that there is a transfer of the relic as symbol of the man of power to the banner as symbol of the relic.¹³ Additionally, literary description of a banner is instruction enough to make such a banner, even without the relic itself, as a symbol of a symbol. Meek also finds that the banners, as depicted in the Book of the Dean of Lismore lay XVI, contain images that are reflected in or identical to the arms of real families or regions.¹⁴ The banners reflect the same symbols used in the heraldry of real men of power in addition to association with legendary warriors in a literary context. At the minimum, they present recognisable symbols wherewith the later mediæval or early modern audience would have been familiar. The symbolism of the individual banners is discussed in chapter XI below.

It suffices to conclude this section with the observation that the relics of the Fenians are symbols and have become encrusted with layers of meaning, just as physical relics are encased in the ever growing layers of their shrines. Their meanings are multiple ; their problem is the core of semiötics, how far one may assign meaning legitimately when meanings extend themselves towards infinity.

¹² The author wishes to express his gratitude to Prof. Kenneth MacKinnon for his firsthand account of Campbell's performance. Campbell recorded a version of the lay similar to MacCallum's in the late 1920s, which is preserved on a Columbia gramophone record issued as DB 190 WA 9615, mx 45613.

¹³ Donald Meek, 'The Banners of the Fian in Gaelic Ballad Tradition,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XI (Summer 1986), pp. 33-36.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 38, plates p. 37.

(b) Predecessors and Parallels in Literature

Cú Chulainn's Ghostly Chariot

The tale 'Siabur-Charpat Con Culaind' is the earliest tale to contain a colloquy between an ancient warrior and S. Patrick. It is thus possible to view it as the formal model for the *Agallamh* and the tradition of the lays related through dialogue with Patrick. Such a view is that of Murphy, who calls it 'a clear forerunner of the Fionn type of ballad.'¹⁵

The position of Murphy is not without difficulties. The frame of the tale is highly contrived, and may be derivative of the *Táin*. The tale is also a mixture of prose, *rosc*, prose runs, and miscellaneous types of verse ; it is not a lay, though it contains something approaching one in form. The long syllabic poem which fills much of the second half of the text is a narrative about an adventure in Lochlann and Tír Scaith — but at quatrain 24 (in a poem of 48), it switches to the description of Cú Chulainn's torment in hell and never returns to the tale.¹⁶ The whole of 'Siabur-Charpat Con Culaind' is a tale about the conversion of Loegaire with the interesting sidenote of loosing Cú Chulainn from his pains.

It is unquestionable that this is the earliest use of S. Patrick in an heroic context to survive. Nevertheless, it is largely derivative and appears patched together. The *réam-scéala* of the *Táin* relate how the poets of Ireland obtained it from Fearghus by raising his spirit after the last MS copy of the *Táin* was lost. S. Patrick's summoning of Cú Chulainn for Loegaire may be derivative of the *Táin* itself. It has already been established that the presence of Patrick in the Fenian cycle was already well-established by A.D. 1100. It is easier to see the creation of this plot, so contrived as to be operatic, in a context where S. Patrick was already established in heroic literature than to view this tale as the origin of that tradition merely because it is somewhat earlier. Of course, such arguments cannot be advanced beyond the realm of probabilities without further evidence, which does not exist.

The parts of the tale are distinct and clumsily connected. The opening is a prose narration of Patrick's mission and attempt to convert Loegaire.¹⁷ A long run follows,

¹⁵ *DF* III, p. lxxxix.

¹⁶ J. O'Beirne Crowe, 'Siabur-Charpat Con Culaind. From "Leabor na h-Uidre" (Fol. 37 et seqq.), a Manuscript of the Royal Irish Academy,' *Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*. Ser. IV, Vol. I (1870), pp. 384-91, qq. 1-24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-5.

describing Cú Chulainn, followed by ordinary prose and a spoken quatrain.¹⁸ Then there is a *rosc*, which is a poem of personal identity and assertion modelled on the poem of Amergin, then a prose bridge.¹⁹ The poem of the adventures and damnation follows and rhapsodises before the prose frame closes the action. The mixture of genres is not unlike that in other heroic tales, or even the *Agallamh*.

The survival of this Old Gaelic tale is unquestionably significant to demonstrate the development of the form of the heroic lay in general, but for the reasons given above, the present author cannot assign a close relationship to the earliest lays and this text which contains a short Ulidian lay in it. It has little in common with the earliest Fenian material from Meyer's list or with the twelfth-century birth of learned Fenian verse. The lays which are here studied, as have been noted above, are from the earliest linguistic strata in *Duanaire Finn* and likely of twelfth-century origin. If any lays were to shew a close relation to a text often said to be a source of the tradition of the lays, it should be the earliest. Some other early lays, such as those in the Book of Leinster, it has been noted in chapter II, do not have the frame of S. Patrick conversing with the ancients. The relic lays are not largely narrative, but knowledge-focused. The match of theme and presentation between 'Siabur-Charpat Con Culaind' and the lays is more with the later tradition than with the earlier. This fact suggests that although the outline of the Fenian cycle is unquestionably heroic, the more direct intellectual predecessors of the relic lays is to be found not in the heroic Ulster sagas, but elsewhere in the Gaelic tradition.

The Irish Ordeals

*The Irish Ordeals*²⁰ are another work, of a very different sort, which can be read as a predecessor of the relic lays. This text is a combination of two items, a legal text listing the objects that could guarantee a truth and a tale about a conflict over ownership of a sword — which is identified as having belonged to Cú Chulainn. It is thus important both as a general model for description of the Fenian relics by reason of the *reliquiæ* connected to Cormac as a lawgiver, but also because there are two direct connexions between this text and the lays. The

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 376-8, 378-9.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 380-1.

²⁰ The fullest edition is that of Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword,' *Irische Texte* III : 1, edd. Wh. Stokes & E. Windisch (Leipzig : S. Hirzel, 1891), pp. 183-229. Another recension is printed by O'Grady in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin* III, pp. 212-28. All discussion following is based on Stokes' text with citations of the paragraphs as numbered by Stokes, as the Irish and English texts run consecutively.

sword in this work has a career that matches part of the history of Oscar's Sword. Also, the story of the conflict regarding the sword and the decision of the matter by Fíthel (Fíthiol in the lay) is very close to the plot of 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti.'

The text begins with an explanatory introduction (§§ 1-10) about the reign of Cormac and a summary of the story of his cauldron, which gave forth food according to the rank of the person with the fork. There is an abrupt change to the listing of twelve items which could be used to prove the truth of testimony (§ 11): Mórann [mac Main]'s Three Collars, Mochta's Adze, Sencha's Lot-casting, The Vessel of Badurn, The Three Dark Stones, The Cauldron of Truth, The Old Lot of Sen son of Aige, Luchta's Iron, Waiting at an Altar, and Cormac's Cup. The objects are described minimally, but several paragraphs are given to the descriptions of how most of them came to be and how they were used. The story of Cormac's Cup is told in the greatest length of all (§§ 25-54). A man appears with a silver branch with three golden apples on it that produced music, and requires that Cormac give him three favours in return for it. He returns and takes Cormac's daughter Ailbhe, then his son Cairbre, then his wife Ethne (§§ 29-31). Cormac follows after the stranger the third time, and passes through a mist into the otherworld (§§ 32-5). Cormac helps to boil a magic pig in a magic cauldron by telling truth (§§ 37-52). When he arrives at the banquet table, he is put to sleep by fairy music. He awakes in the banquet to find his family with him, and a golden cup that breaks when falsehoods are spoken. The stranger reveals that he is Manannán, and that Cormac may have the cup as well as the branch and his family for life, but that the objects would disappear upon his demise (§§ 52-4). Thus, the cup, a guarantor of the truths of Cormac's judgements, is not present to the author of the text, just as the Fenian relics do not survive Oisín. One may also note a similarity of plot structure between the episode and 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti.'

There is another digression on assemblies (§§ 55-7). Within the section it is mentioned that Fionn was made the master of Cormac's fifty royal champions to enforce his rule. The text then proceeds to the Psalter of Cashel; it is stated that Cormac's helpers in its compilation were Fíthel and Fintan mac Bóchra (i.e. Fíthiol and Fionntan). Thus this text places these characters, all of whom are significant to the lays in this study, into the same context outside of and prior to the genre of the lays. Fíthiol is the judge in CC, and Cormac appears there also. Fionntan is mentioned by Oisín in SF q. 8c, and as has been discussed in chapter II, the association of Fionntan with the ancient salmon could potentially identify him with the salmon that fetches SC from the spring.

The remainder of the text is the tale of Socht's Sword. Socht had a wonderful sword,

which Dubdrenn wanted to buy from him. Socht would not sell it (§59-60). Dubdrenn then took the sword and had his name put inside of the hilt whilst Socht slept (§61-4). He then sued, claiming that the sword was his own ; Fíthel is the judge, and decides for Socht (§65-7). Dubdrenn then goes to Cormac and claims that he is a victim of perjury. The hilt is opened, and Dubdrenn's name found. Socht concedes the case (§68-73). Socht then claims that his father got the sword because he found it stabbed through the neck of his grandfather's corpse, and calls on Cormac for justice concerning that murder. Cormac awards the sword back to him with seven *cumhals* compensation (§74-6). Dubdrenn then decides to confess what he has done. Cormac recognises the sword as the one that killed his own grandfather, Conn Cédchathach, and that had been Cú Chulainn's ; he then decides on damages against Socht, to wit, he keeps the sword for himself (§77). Although the case is different, the procedure of damages, and also the two judges deciding on the same case, are followed closely in CC. Unfortunately §66 is imperfect, and thus it cannot be determined exactly how Cormac became involved as the second judge.

The lays edited in this study have not only characters from this tale present in them, but other close thematic connexions with this text. In these numbers, they cannot be coincidence. The relationship of this text and the lays will be explored further in the discussion of the individual lays.

Fionntan

In chapter II, the connexion of 'The Colloquy Between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill' with two, possibly three, of the relic lays was raised.

This dialogue is significantly similar to the early lays in several ways. The poem is in the same form as the lays, quatrains of *ógláchas ar deibhidhe*. It is a discussion of the ancients, sharing and preserving lore and anecdota of their lives. Fionntan tells of his time as a salmon, listing the pools and fonts he inhabited until the hawk snatched his eye.²¹ The hawk relates a tale of the Battle of Magh Tuireadh, where he snatched the arm of Nuadha.²² The manner in which he keeps it makes it play, albeit temporarily, the rôle of a relic. The two exchange lore about the mythological cycle in short, personal anecdotes for much of the lay. The tale of the magical branch is learned ; when Fionntan plants the nut, apple, and sloe from

²¹ 'Colloquy,' qq. 14-19.

²² Ibid., qq. 35-52.

the branch he makes known landmarks for which the tale's last two quatrains form a *dinnsheanchas*.²³ The hawk replies with an Ulster tale, a darkly humorous account of the battles of the cycle told from the perspective of the hawk narrating lists of those whose carrion he ate, including Cú na gCleas, (who appears in CO).²⁴ The closing quatrains with their reflections on mortality are similar to Patrick's exhortations for the conversion of Oisín. This poem thus presents the kinds of history, learning, and even digressing lists as the relic lays. Furthermore, Fionntan was at times a salmon or an eagle, and is in a sense himself the relic as he explains those lives of his to the hawk. The references in the poem are precisely the type, and often the specific ones, that appear in the relic lay ; even if there be no direct borrowing, this tale of Fionntan is drawing from the same intellectual sources as the relic lays, wherefore some further enquiry into other Fionntan texts should be made.

There are a few other places where Fionntan is either discussed or cited in mediæval sources. He appears in the eleventh century *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, where it is related that he was spared from the Flood, and that 'Issé adféda na scéla-sa do cách, íar ndíliun.'²⁵ There is little worthy of mention apart from the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* and a chronology in the Book of Ballymote, fol. 12 from that period in a historical context. It is nevertheless clear that Fionntan was cited as an authority for history, as the Rev. Dr. Céitinn makes a violent critique of the poems attributed to him that he quotes in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, dismissing the antediluvian histories as poetic or dæmonic figments and attacking Hanmer's citation of such texts on the grounds that their authenticity is impossible because they are contrary to Scripture.²⁶ Another short poem of the type quoted in Céitinn is printed in the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin*.²⁷ The close relation of these fragments of the legend of Fionntan to the lays as has been discussed in chapter II thus establishes a learned link to the broader intellectual world of the mediæval Gaelic tradition. Fionntan boasts that in his time he was the chief brehon to every

²³ Ibid., qq. 64-85.

²⁴ Ibid., qq. 86-113.

²⁵ R.A.S. Macalister, ed. , *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (London : Irish Texts Society, 1938), part I, p. 32, § 13.

²⁶ Séathrún Céitinn, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, part I, ed. David Comyn (London : Irish Texts Society, 1902), pp. 142-3, 147-55.

²⁷ Prof. Connellan, *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the Year 1857*, vol. V (Dublin : The Ossianic Society, 1860, pp. 244-9.

king of Ireland.²⁸ The boast is the key to the character of the ancient in such poems. His authority as an ancient for history is unsurprising, especially when his association with the salmon of knowledge already discussed is considered. The authority is, however, deeper ; the text is drawing also from the authority of the legal tradition along with the historical. It is precisely this overlap between fascination for history and letters with that for law that is seen in the relic lays and this text. Further analysis of the relationship between the 'Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill' and the relic lays follows in the individual sections regarding sources and parallels of the motifs in each lay. It is already clear that there is no other single text that shares the concerns of the relic lays and their intellectual contents so much as Fionntan's dialogue, and that it is a product of similar background if not a direct source of the lays.²⁹

Giolla an Choimdheadh

The concern for the construction of synthetic history is not only the concern of annalists and historians like those constructing the *Leabhar Gabhála* ; it is also a concern of poets. Of the relic lays, three of the five in Duanaire Finn are concerned with who the possessors of an object over time have been. There is a surface resemblance to genealogy or regnal and abbatal successions in the lists of owners of the Crane-Bag, Fionn's Shield, and Oscar's Sword. Upon closer inspection, it is notable that there is a couplet or a quatrain giving each generation more than a name. This method of narration is far closer to that of poetic summaries of history. Meyer was the first to describe poems that sketch world history as a genre, and noted with approval the evenly paced works of Dublittir and Airbertach mac Coisse as the most satisfying as works of literature.³⁰ Among such poems, however, the more uneven work 'A Rí richid réidig dam' by Giolla an Choimdheadh ua Cormaic is of the greatest importance to the present study for two reasons. First, it mixes mythology, Biblical references, and Classical and Irish history, picking and choosing the heroic stories in each ; it is therefore useful to see

²⁸ 'Colloquy,' q. 30.

²⁹ Prof. Nagy ('Close Encounters of the Traditional Kind in Early Irish Literature,' *Celtic Folklore and Christianity*, ed. Patrick Ford [Santa Barbara : McNally & Loftin, 1983], pp. 129-49) believes that Fionntan, Oisín, and other such ancients are all developments from the need of the literati to be able to back pre-literate parts of the tradition which they held. The body of the paper examines more closely the concerns of the texts of the dialogue of Fionntan and 'Siabur-Charpat Con Culaind,' but not the Ossianic texts discussed in the beginning of the paper. A comparative examination of literary forms is not attempted ; a study of similarities in literary structure and content of poems attributed to Fionntan and Oisín could illuminate this subject greatly.

³⁰ Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigecht* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910), p. xxviii.

what the conception of history in it is. Secondly, it contains the oldest reference (of only a handful) to the *Corr-bholg*. The latter of these points is discussed in the following chapter.

The poem is preserved in the Leabhar Laighneach, and therefore antedates the lays in this study ; Meyer dated it to the twelfth century.³¹ The contents are a history of the world since the Deluge. The poem is in the synthesising tradition ; events are referenced by Biblical, Classical historical, and Irish synthetic events.³² The walk through history places the mythological alongside the historical when using Classical material ; the quatrain that describes Hercules is followed by one on Tarquin and the rise of the Roman republic.³³ There is a later, longer section on the adventures of Hercules and Ulysses, especially concerning the Trojan War, which fills the next hundred and three lines. There are many Classical names, but little evidence of direct familiarity with ancient sources, especially Homer. The names that survive are so common that it is entirely plausible that they were part of a stock of Classical names used in Gaelic even by those unfamiliar with Greek or even Latin. Dr. Katharine Simms' database³⁴ at present gives a list of thirty-seven Classical tales told as more than a minor reference in bardic poetry ; of these five relate to Alexander, seven to the history of the Roman Republic (mostly Cæsar), nine the Trojan War, three Hercules. There are a few demonstrating a knowledge of Ovid, or having rarer motifs, but it can be concluded that even poets who had no direct knowledge of the Classics could use – or attempt to use – Classical names or motifs as a sign of their learning, even if they clearly had not read the originals.³⁵ The texts of the Classical adaptations into Irish (apart from the *Togail Troí*, which is also in the Leabhar Laighneach,) are Early Modern, but one must note that the prose romances of Hercules and of Ulysses are the same episodes to which there are allusions in the lays and bardic poems ; it is not unreasonable to conclude that the same mediæval Latin sources such as Pseudo-Dares

³¹ MS fol. 143a-145a, ll. 17727-18170, printed in Best, R.I., & al., edd., *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Leabar na Núachongbála*, 6 vols. (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954-), pp. 574-87. Meyer printed only the Fenian section of the poem, op. cit. pp. 46-51.

³² E.g. *ibid.*, ll. 17751-2, where the Fir Bolg domination of the Boyne valley is placed at the same time as the story of Joseph in Genesis.

³³ *Ibid.*, ll. 17775-83.

³⁴ Special thanks are due to Dr. Katharine Simms of Trinity College, Dublin, for her assistance and use of her database of bardic poetry in finding these items and those in the following section.

³⁵ E.g. the poem incipit 'Mór iongabhail anma ríogh,' in which the story of Dædalus is told, but he is confused with his son Icarus ; or 'Seanoir cuilg cairt an Bhurcaigh,' in which Hercules goes on the expedition in quest of the *Purple Fleece*. Among the multiple copies of both, several may be found among the MSS of the Royal Irish Academy, although they remain unpublished at present.

Phrygius (perhaps through other intermediaries) lie behind poems like this world history, even if often secondhand. The focus then broadens and the centuries rush past in a matter of quatrains. The Ulster cycle then arrives, and seizes the poet's attention for most of folio 144b. The poem then plunges into the Fenian cycle with nothing in between seen worthy of description. The early life of Fionn is described over its length : birth, name, defeat of Aillén, poetic learning, and joining of the *fian* (ll. 18015-18054). Some miscellaneous minor adventures follow in summary. The Fenian section ends with Fionn's recovery of the *corr-bholg* (ll. 18159-62). The poem ends there without completing the cycle. Two quatrains thereafter simply state that a hundred and sixty events of world history have been described and that the poem is over.

The summary of the poem shews a structural similarity to Fionn's Shield and especially Oscar's sword. History fast-forwards until a point of interest is reached, the tale is told, and then centuries pass in lines until the next point of interest arrives. There are tales taken from the major heroic points in Classical history and mythology alongside the cycles of Gaelic literature. In this poem may be seen a model for the manner in which the histories of the Fenian *reliquiæ* are narrated, which itself contains a portion of Fenian narrative, and which is a learned bardic poem.

Later Bardic Poetry

Hereto, this section has dealt with possible sources of the genre of the Fenian lay, and more specifically, the relic lay. Almost invariably, the further that one pushes backwards into the mists of time, the scantier the results are. One result of this fact is that the material considered here appears more tenuously connected to the wider literary tradition than it should. There are, nevertheless, a number of bardic poems extant, all of later date, which describe objects in a manner not unlike the relic lays. There is no test to shew whether there is a *Nachleben* of the relic lays evidenced in these poems, or they are another independent foray into the same literary region. Regardless, seeing the relic lays in context as much as possible warrants an outline of these poems.

In bardic poetry, mentions of regal objects are fairly frequent ; there are also occasions such as inaugurations that present opportunities for more extended discussions of one or more such objects. Worthy of mention is the praise of Aodh mac Duaich by reference to his glorious shield that he carries before him into battle. The poem is attributed to Dallán Forgaill, but it is

doubtful that the poem is so old. It is preserved in Trinity MS H.3.18, p. 560, and a diplomatic text and a modernised fragment from an unknown source have been printed.³⁶ One must suspect that this is a later poem put into the mouth of an ancient bard, but the language is ancient enough to make it certain that such a tradition well predated the twelfth-century items considered in this study.

The earliest such poem of definite date that focuses on objects is the poem 'Cóir Chonnacht ar chath Laighean,' in honour of Hugh O'Connor, King of Connaught (r. 1293-1309), and arguably his inaugural ode.³⁷ The ode opens with an argument of the claim of O'Connor on the sovereignty of Ireland ; it then changes direction halfway through (q. 37). Stock items of riches are listed as signs of wealth and power. Much of the later portion of the poem is a catalogue of items of princely wealth and summary descriptions, each one given a quatrain. Q. 37 describes the construction of drinking vessels, '[c]uirn áilne go n-eagar gcloch,' from fine gold for Hugh. Q. 38 describes the decoration of swords, breastplates, and an ale vat. Q. 39 describes a golden *brannamh* set ; the playing of *brannamh* has associations of sovereignty in the same manner as *fidhcheall*.³⁸ The next quatrain describes the battle-flags over his men. The poem then briefly returns to the richness of his garments. Q. 42 describes his collar of gold and silver ; q. 43 his helm and armour. The sword follows in q. 44, then the shield in q. 45. Q. 46, the last one concerned with equipment, praises his bridle and golden spurs. The last three quatrains laud the O'Connor sovereignty, Hugh's countenance, and the beauty of his daughter. The list is remarkable ; although it contains only thirteen items, it includes all of the types of items which are the Fenian relics in the lays, apart from the unique *corr-bholg*. (It may yet be argued that the *corr-bholg* is another valuable item seen around the neck, appropriate to a *féinidh*, just as the golden collar is to the king, or the truth-testing collars of Mórann for a lawgiver.)³⁹ The *brannamh* set is reflected in the *fidhcheall* set in SCP q. 91 and its equivalent SCA q. 85, even if it not the subject of the poem. Likewise, the other arms or clothing all are items mentioned in the lays. Of the list, only the ale-vat is not an object

³⁶ Diplomatic ed. in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society* V (1860), pp. 258-62 ; a fragment of four heavily modernised quatrains with translation are printed in James Hardiman, *Irish Minstrelsy, or Bardic Remains of Ireland*, vol. II (London : Joseph Robins, 1831), pp. 190-1.

³⁷ Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'An Inaugural Ode to Hugh O'Connor?' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XLIX-L (1997), p. 548. The text of the poem is printed on pp. 552-65.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 572-3.

³⁹ *Irish Ordeals*, §§ 14-16.

found in the lays in this study. The overlap of the objects in this study : swords, shields, neckwear indicative of rank, drinking vessels, suggests that these objects are all signs of power which are used in verse as symbols of that power. The significance of such objects may be further noted in the poem 'Dá urradh i n-iath Éireann' by Giolla Críost Brúilingeach in the Book of the Dean of Lismore.⁴⁰ The poem is a parallel laud of MacDiarmaid and satire of Maguire. The manner in which the contrast is drawn is by describing their horses, armour, and arms with only occasional reference to their physical descriptions or their character. There is a poem, incipit 'A mhic gur meala t'arma,' on the taking of arms that is nearly a catalogue of them as symbols of a nobleman's power.⁴¹ One final poem on multiple objects is the lament for Aodh Ó Conchobhair by Seaán Ó Clumháin.⁴² Most of the poem describes the bloody, torn tunic that Aodh wore in his last battle, alternating descriptions of it with fragments of the events of the day. In the final quatrain, the poet changes to another object, the sword of Donnchadh Carrach Ó Ceallaigh who slew Aodh. The sword is in the hands of the poet, who reveals by having that object that he has revenged the man whom he laments. The poet's symbols of power in all of these poems are thus frequently the very objects of war that enforce that authority.

Other poems focus more closely on one or two objects in a manner similar to the relic lays. Most common among these are poems about swords or other similar weaponry. Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn wrote a bardic praise about a dagger-blade (*sgian*), 'Mo chean doit, a Ghráinne gharbh'.⁴³ This poem is much like the poems of Fionn's Shield or Oscar's Sword in content. Quatrains 1-8 are a praise of the quality of the weapon. Quatrain 9 describes how it became the property of one Aodh Óg. A few reflections on the places where it has been and the uses to which it has been put, such as being raised at drinking parties (q. 11), or used in obtaining salmon (q. 12). It is then stated that the dagger cannot be obtained perforce (qq. 14-6). The last two quatrains tell that the poet obtained the dagger by asking for it in the poem, and that it is now his. The narrative thread of this poem is therefore concerned with how the owner of the

⁴⁰ William Watson, ed., *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh : Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1937), poem VII, pp. 46-59. The first line in the MS reads 'Da vrre in nea errin.'

⁴¹ The poem is partially printed in its entry in O'Grady's *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol I., pp. 376-7.

⁴² Lambert McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána* (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1939-40), Gaelic, vol. I, pp. 6-8 ; English, vol. II, pp. 4-6.

⁴³ Eleanor Knott, ed., *A Bhfuil Aguinn dár chum Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn*, 2 vols. (Lúndain : Cumainn na Sgríbhneann Gaedhilge, 1922-6), Poem 33, Vol. I, pp. 242-5, Vol. II 160-2.

object obtained it, with central sections in the frame giving a picture of the item and narrating its history to that point. Tadhg's narrator, in obtaining the dagger from Aodh who has wielded it, is in a situation similar to that of Patrick in the lays, who controls the objects that once belonged to the *fiana*. The poem thus displays affinities in both form and content with the relic lays in this study.

Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn also wrote a poem for Éamonn Búrc (Edmund Burke), 'Gur mheala an t-armsa, a Éamuinn,'⁴⁴ which is entirely concerned with his sword. The occasion of the poem is the presentation of the sword when he came of age to take arms ; it describes the proper way to treat a sword for its own preservation and therefore the good of its owner. It thus presents some hypothetical situations, such as q. 15, 'Dá rabh Bháitéar, a bhas sheang, ag ól nó ag imbirt fidhcheall, bíse it armaibh re hucht gcean, a lucht adhbhair go n-airgthear.'⁴⁵ One more poem of this type worthy of specific mention is the poem 'Sgíán mo charad ar mo chliú,' written in thanks for the gift of a dagger from Donnchadh Cairbreach ; it is unattributed, but Bergin speculates that it may be the work of Muireadhach Albanach. The poem is of only eight quatrains, and alternates between telling how much protection such a weapon is and describing how beautiful some aspect of it is.⁴⁶

There are other items which are apostrophes of other objects, although they are not very common. Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh's poem 'A chlairsíoch Chnuic Í Chosgair,' dated to between 1382-7 by Bergin, praises an ancient harp.⁴⁷ The 'history' includes speculations back into mythical times, such as the assertion that '... as tú Áisíoch Fhalláin, an Mhíonghlórach Mhanannáin,' (q. 11) ; Ó Dálaigh then posits that Aonghus had given it a different name (q. 13). It was also the harp of Bodhbh Dearg, and that of Ilbhreac of Assaroe, of Donnchadh of Durrow, of Diarmaid (qq. 14-18). This harp is thus all the famous harps of history in one, and only one among the wonderful harps in the hall of O'Conor. The pattern of multiple namings is like that of Oscar's Sword.⁴⁸ Another such poem is the anonymous 'An tú m'aithne, a fhalluing donn?' in the Book of the O'Conor Donn, an address to a worn cloak that wants

⁴⁴ Ibid., Poem 19, Gaelic, vol. I, pp. 138-40 ; English, vol. II, pp. 91-92.

⁴⁵ 'If Walter, thou slender of hand, be feasting or playing chess, be thou in arms to win triumphs, until his men of means (?) are despoiled.' Ibid., Gaelic, vol. I, pp. 140 ; English, vol. II, p. 92.

⁴⁶ Osborn Bergin, ed., *Irish Bardic Poetry* (Dublin : Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), poem 52, pp. 192-3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., poem 15, pp. 66-9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., poem 41, pp. 157-8.

replacing, recounting its history. Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn's poem 'Fuaras aisgidh gan iarradh,' is a praise in gratitude for the gift of a golden cup from Alastrann, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross. The cup is only used in the first thirteen quatrains of thirty as a means of praising the generosity of Alastrann. The only description that it is ever given is simply 'golden' in q. 11d.⁴⁹ There is no real sense of the object, but it is used as a literary device to bring the poet to the matter of addressing the Earl and reciting his praises.

Another poem which is concerned with an object other than a weapon is 'A Phaidrín do dhúisg mo dhéar,' attributed to Aithbhreac Inghean Coirceadail in the Book of the Dean of Lismore.⁵⁰ It is a verse in late Classical style, but a personal lament of a woman for her husband rather than a bardic poem. It has a strong structure with a frame in which she addresses her lament to his Rosary. She then proceeds to praise her husband, and then to describe the barrenness of Clann Néill without him. The frame returns with a quatrain of grief much like Oisín's laments in form : 'Is briste mo chridhe im chlí, agus bídh nó go dtí m'éag, ar éis an abhradh dhuibh úir, a phadrín do dhúisg mo dhéar.'⁵¹ She concludes by returning to address the Rosary again, and begging the blessing of the Virgin. Although there are no direct proofs, one might suspect that this lament of unusual origin and structure has been influenced by the Ossianic laments ; it certainly is textually closer to that tradition in its form than to the keen.

These items discussed above, when taken together, demonstrate that although the relic lays are an unusual branch of mediæval literature, they are not so greatly isolated in theme as they first appeared by comparison to the Fenian cycle only, especially when one does not take into account material significantly more recent than the lays in question. Other later materials within the Fenian cycle with close relationships to the relic lays that fall into this last category, in addition to the *Bratacha* quatrains, are two lays in Duanaire Finn and other MSS, 'The Ballad of the Mantle' and the lay 'The Bird Crib' ; these will be discussed in chapter XI.

(c) Method of Analysis

At this point, it is hoped that a context for how the lays edited in this study fit into the corpus of literature has been established. It remains to make further commentary on the lays

⁴⁹ McKenna, op. cit., Gaelic, vol. I, pp. 114-7 ; English, vol. II, pp. 69-71.

⁵⁰ Watson, op.cit., poem VIII, pp. 60-5.

⁵¹ Ibid., q. 15.

themselves. The textual difficulties of the lays are addressed in the footnotes and linguistic discussions in the editions ; obscurities of content are addressed in the lettered endnotes. Furthermore, it is realised that the commentaries which Murphy made on the poems, whilst requiring updating and addition, need not be rewritten. The chapters which follow are therefore focused on tracing the learned sources and references of each poem, although not to the total exclusion of other points. An attempt will be made to draw each poem together, with a presentation of each poem as a whole as a work of literature whose author was engaging his source materials in an act of creativity and not one of passive distortion of tradition.

The format of these chapters will be standardised as closely as possible for ease of reference and comparison. Each will contain : first, a summary of the poem, including a brief recapitulation of the MSS of the poems, argumentum and the date of the poem as evaluated in the edition and chapter IV, and comments on the state of the text ; second, discussion of the of the plot and literary analysis of it, generally discussion of form, function, and language ; third, discussion of the nature of the relic ; fourth, analysis of other learned references which will be subdivided into the categories of Native (Traditional), Classical, and Christian. Conclusions will follow. Such discussions of the texts individually are chapters VI to X following hereafter.

VI : *Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga*

The Text

'Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga' is extant only in the *Duanaire Finn* ; the copy is unfortunately imperfect, for it breaks off with no *dúnadh* after nineteen quatrains. The text of the lay is a colloquy between Oisín, Caoilte, (and perhaps S. Patrick),¹ which proceeds from an abrupt enquiry about the history of a pouch that had belonged to Fionn's father, Cumhall, to Caoilte's [?] recitation of its origins and a listing of all those who had possessed it. As the period between the end of the text and the time of Cumhall is somewhat more than a generation, it must be assumed that the lay, if it continued at the same narrative pace, would have been about thirty quatrains. If the story of the loss of the bag to Goll at Cnucha were told in detail, it could be somewhat longer, but it is unlikely that the lay could have been much more than forty quatrains without containing a major digression. The text is thus fragmentary and contains signs of refashioning in the confusion of speakers. Q. 14 has signs of rewriting. It contains a hypermetrical line (b), late grammatical forms not found elsewhere in the poem, and intrudes the frame back into the body of the poem. No other lines are faulty, and the portion of the text that is preserved does not appear to have suffered significant corruption. The language is suggestive of the last quarter of the twelfth century, chiefly on grounds of vocabulary.²

The lay opens as a dialogue of Oisín and Caoilte concerning the origins of the *corr-bholg*. Caoilte asserts that the bag was made by Manannán from the skin of a woman changed into a crane (qq. 1-3). He then proceeds to tell (qq. 4-15) the tale of Aoife. Aoife the daughter of Dealbhaoth and Iuchra the daughter of Ábhartach both loved one man, Ilbreac. Iuchra tricked Aoife to join her for a swim, whereupon she transformed the unfortunate Aoife into a crane, cursing her to remain as a curiosity in the house of Manannán and to be made into the *corr-bholg*. These things came to pass ; she dwelt two centuries in the house of Manannán, who fashioned the bag from her skin upon her death. He kept his treasures therein, magically protected, for they could only be retrieved when the tide was full. The bag passes to Lugh (q. 15). It then proceeds to the sons of Cearmad, who killed him, and then the sons of Míl, who slew them in turn (qq. 16-7). Manannán repossessed the bag, until he bestowed it on Conaire

¹ Vid. note A to the edition.

² The evidence is presented in the concluding remarks to the edition in Part II.

at Tara (qq. 18-9). *Cetera desunt*.

Literary Structure

The structure of the lay is simple ; the opening is a series of questions. The first question in the first quatrain is whence the *corr-bholg* of Cumhall came. Caoilte responds (q. 2) that it was made by Manannán, from the skin of a crane. A second question (q. 3), arises from it, asking for the story of the crane. This leads into the tale of Aoife around which most of the text is centred. The second part of the in-tale begins when Caoilte reverts to the first question at q. 16 and changes to the beginning of a narration of how Cumhall received the bag. There is no third question at the point of the intrusion of the frame into the narrative where one finds the point of change between the sub-tales.

There is an uncertainty in this poem not present in the other relic lays. The opening questions do not make mention of the presence or the absence of the *corr-bholg* to the participants in the dialogue. 'Laoidh Scíth Fhinn' opens with a lament about the shield ; it is only in the closing discussion, qq. 59-60, that Oisín reveals that the shield is destroyed, whilst addressing what must be the remnants of it. If the conclusion to 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga' were present, one might suspect a similar type of ending, or a sad conclusion that it is empty and ruined. Nevertheless, there is no direct evidence for the presence or the absence of the bag in the text.

One may further question the construction of the dialogue. If q. 15 is indeed an original part of the text (since it is suspect), the lay is a colloquy of Caoilte and Oisín. That is unusual, for it does not give a rôle to S. Patrick, thereby giving a justification for the preservation of the work. Nevertheless, the list of early items in chapter II demonstrates that the lack of an *Agallamh na Seanórach* type context is neither unique nor problematic. It is, rather, the placing of the two aged Fenians in dialogue that is slightly odd. From the perspective of the characters, it is odder. The text provides no clear reason why Oisín should be utterly ignorant of an object that was carried by his grandfather and father throughout their lives and which he therefore would have seen often. Caoilte is Oisín's cousin, not a senior to him, and furthermore Oisín's ignorance is not in keeping with his own position of imparting Fenian knowledge to S. Patrick and his retinue. It is more satisfactory for the rôles of the characters if one rejects q. 15 as an interpolation and assumes that the dialogue is, in fact, intended to be between Caoilte and S. Patrick, who requires such an explanation.

The Relic

The *corr-bholg* itself is an important object in several ways. Apart from its use as a literary device in the lay, it is an enduring symbol of the Fenian warriors. As such, it appears outwith the lay in several other texts ; it is impossible that the object originated with the writer of the lay. Nevertheless, it appears that the bag's earlier history represents a synthesis of previous motifs on the part of the author of the lay, who has thereby extended the symbolism of the object in an act of literary creativity.

In the lay, the object is unquestionably a 'crane-bag,' made of the skin of a specific crane. At the opening of the poem, the author is apparently aware that *corr-bholg* is ambiguous and suggests most naturally a 'round bag' in the question 'Cía ga raibe in corr-bholg cóir?' in q. 1 ; he postpones mention of the crane until the answer in q. 2, where it would come as a surprise. There are two other mentions of the *corr-bholg* in literature of the period, in neither of them is the intent of the term entirely clear. Giolla an Choimdheadh gives only one quatrain to the *corr-bholg* in his poem : 'Tricha sét, ní gáes fir buirb, tall Find a cráes in chorrbuilg, íar nguín Glonda 'cunn áth oll is LÉ[i]th Lúachra na llúathbond,' 'Thirty jewels – it is not the wisdom of an ignorant man – Finn took out of the jaws of the crane-bag, after he had slain Glonna at the vast ford and Liath Luachra of the swift deeds.'³ The object is clearly a bag, and the translation could as easily be 'round bag,' but Meyer wrote after Mac Neill's edition and was most likely influenced by the lay. The same textual uncertainty is present in the passage in 'Macgnímartha Finn.' The oldest edition of the text, published prior to the discovery of Duanaire Finn in Rome, leaves the word *corr-bholg* untranslated, but footnotes it as 'i.e. a round bag.'⁴ Meyer's own translation of the text of the 'Macgnímartha,' previous to Mac Neill's edition of the lay, translated the term as 'treasure bag' ; he did not consider it worthy of comment in his earlier Gaelic edition, as it does not appear that a 'crane-bag' ever occurred to him.⁵

The author of the lay himself seems aware that the object does not have to be a 'crane-bag,' but is naturally to him a 'round bag.' To choose the former interpretation requires either a misunderstanding or a reason. O'Rahilly favoured the former cause, believing that the *bolg*

³ Kuno Meyer, *Fianaigeacht* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910), pp. 50-1 ; LL fol. 145a, ll. 18123-6.

⁴ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin* IV (Dublin : The Ossianic Society, 1859), p. 289.

⁵ Kuno Meyer, 'The Boyish Exploits of Finn,' *Ériu* I (1904), p. 180 ; 'Macgnímartha Finn,' *Révue Celtique* V (1883), pp. 195-204.

element was the word for a spear, and that the first part of the word was reinterpreted after the latter part had changed also :

Gilla in Choimded and the compiler of 'Macgnímartha Finn' understood the *corrbolg* to be some kind of bag (*bolg*) containing 'jewels' or precious articles of workmanship ; according to the latter text, the bag and its contents belonged to Cumall, father of Finn. Later tradition, apart from the poem mentioned above [i.e. the lay], knows nothing of the *corrbolg*. In our principal source, 'Macgnímartha Finn', the allusions to the *corrbolg* are more or less meaningless as they stand, and they serve no apparent purpose in the tale. It is clear that in what we are told concerning the *corrbolg* we have the remnants of a dying tradition, which in the twelfth century was no longer understood. The analogy of *caladbolg* and *gaí Bulga* places the real meaning of *corrbolg* beyond doubt. It is a name for the lightning-weapon, belonging to the Otherworld-deity, which Finn acquired ; in other words it is ultimately identical with the spear of Fiacclach mac Conchinn. *Corrbolg*, therefore, would mean something like 'pointed lightning', i.e. the lightning-spear ; for the adjectival prefix compare *corr-ga*, *corr-shleg*. As the word *bolg*. 'lightning', suggests, Finn's connexion with the *corrbolg* probably belonged exclusively to the tradition of the Builg or Érainn. Liath Luachra we may take to have been a Munster counterpart of Goll ; the episode in which he is slain by Finn originally told how Finn got possession of the god's lightning-spear and 'slew' the god with it.⁶

O'Rahilly's theory provides some interesting possibilities, despite several faults. The chief problem is that the *corr-bholg* belonged to Cumhall in both of the other early texts. If the *corr-bholg* were the mythical lightning bolt, it would not have been in the hands of Cumhall, lost and then recovered, but rather seized from its owner once, killing that owner in the attempt. The possibility that it was originally a spear, even if not the One-and-Only-Spear-of-Deicide that O'Rahilly portrays it to be, cannot be dismissed as part of genesis of the object. A second flaw in such theories is that they require a 'stupid scribe' who twists and distorts his sources through his misunderstandings and transmits them in the texts he produces. Instead, one finds that all three of the texts with mentions of the *corr-bholg* are learned. Giolla an Choimheadh's poem is a history of sixty important events in the history of the world. 'Macgnímartha Finn' is a closely constructed literary tale. 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga' incorporates a synthetic history as it attempts to answer a question. Of course, one cannot rule out the possibility that all three texts derive from a single obscure text by such a mediæval corruptor as O'Rahilly suggested, yet it is best not to embrace such a theory too tightly if there is a good reason not to do so. Such a reason for believing the texts over the 'reconstructed "tradition"' can be found in closer analysis of its connexion to the motif of the crane, which has a long and consistent history in all of the Celtic countries. If the *corr-bholg* were once a weapon, then it ceased to be so long

⁶ *EIHM*, pp. 73-4.

before any extant text was written, and it must be said that the reconstruction of it as such is speculative. Every bit as reasonable is the position that the the bag was always a magical bag to hold treasures, but that it acquired its interpretation as a *crane*-bag rather than a *round*, *bulging*, or *singular* bag at a later date.

The element of the crane in this lay must be explored in two different frames of reference. Anne Ross has explored the ways that cranes are used symbolically in all of the Celtic countries over time, which illuminates the object of the *corr-bholg* as it is presented in the lay.⁷ There is also another lay in the *Agallamh* in 24 P 5 which shares some plot elements and characters with this lay ; the relationship is the subject of further exploration below.⁸

Ross' paper traces the use of cranes in Celtic speaking-areas from the beginning. The first half of her paper is concerned chiefly with the association of cranes – usually a trio of them – with deities such as Esus in Gallo-Roman statuary. Esus is sometimes associated with Mars as well as with Mercury ; he had associations with war with which cranes were associated in a Gaulish context : 'La grue apparaît aussi dans des contextes militaires, et puet ainsi être associée à Mars dans son rôle de dieu de la guerre.'⁹ These associations were not attributes of either deity in a strictly Classical context, but are held in common with the insular war-god Midir.¹⁰ In the Insular tradition, cranes appear special in early Welsh tradition, exemplified by numerous place-names and the Ancient Laws. The Irish would not eat cranes or other similar birds. It is in the Irish tradition that more complete literary descriptions appear in the war context, where the crane is an ill omen for one going to battle.¹¹ The next context is that of the woman changed into a crane, the motif found in 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga' and the episode 'Oisín & an Chorr' in 24 P 5, especially in the dialogue poem. In addition to these two poems, Ross finds many other exempla of the woman transformed, including legends associating S. Columba with crane-women and a charm for protection against evil agents in the

⁷ Anne Ross, 'Esus et les Trois «Grues,»' *Études Celtiques* IX (1960), pp. 405-38.

⁸ The lay is found on pp. 429-47 of the MS, equivalent to AS III, pp. 84-110. Murphy noted this parallel in *DF* III, p. 21, n. 6b, but did not explore it in any detail, as he relied on the summary in Reidar Christiansen, *The Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (Oslo : Kommosjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1931), pp. 418-9.

⁹ Ross, op. cit., pp. 415.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 415 & 417.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 422-7.

form of cranes or herons that invokes his name.¹² Ross presents an undeniable body of evidence that the crane is an ancient symbol, associated with war, tragedy, and magical or otherworldly women, which has been present in all of the Celtic cultures from the earliest times and which extends into folk beliefs and customs collected less than a century ago without great change in its associations. Now that the symbol of the crane has been reviewed, an evaluation of the relation of the crane poems in 24 P 5 and *Duanaire Finn* in relation to each other and to the wider tradition will follow.

The 24 P 5 poem is clearly a dialogue that has, like 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' been incorporated into the later recension of the *Agallamh* found only in that MS. This poem is cast as a dialogue of the ancients Oisín and Miadhach inghean Eachdhuinn (in the form of a crane) without S. Patrick's presence in this episode. It is in form and tone not dissimilar to the dialogue of Fionntan and the hawk. The opening ten quatrains of it are an initial discussion wherein the crane and Oisín recognise the ancient venerability of each other, and begin to discuss days long gone. Miadhach then proceeds to tell Oisín her story.¹³ Miadhach and Morann fell into rivalry over the love of Ábhartach. Eachdhonn makes a test of the love of his natural daughter Miadhach and foster-daughter Morann for him. Morann would agree to forsake Ábhartach if asked, but Miadhach would not, even when offered compensation by treasures. Eachdhonn is angered that Miadhach's love for Ábhartach is stronger than her obedience to him. Miadhach relates the result : 'Cuiris Eachdhonn mé ar síabhradh/ re ré sheacht *bhficheat mbliadhan/ ó gach doire do dhoire/ i rriocht cuirre glardhaighe.*'¹⁴ She then enumerates in qq. 29-37 – a learned sub-poem – her lovers ; these are ancient or special animals. She then requests a story in response from Oisín.

Oisín begins relating his tale at q. 39, which takes until the penultimate quatrain of the lay to narrate. A stranger and a beautiful woman appear while fifteen *féinidhe* are playing *fidhcheall*. He challenges them to play him with their wives at stake. Naturally, they all lose to the stranger, who, with the help of a little magic, departs with the women, leaving an ogham behind. The *féinidhe*, following the instructions on the ogham, go to Lochlann, where they are imprisoned after the queen falls in love with Fionn. Goll comes after them to their rescue, and is told by the queen that the king can be slain only with his own sword, which she gives

¹² Ibid., pp. 431-24

¹³ For a longer summary of the lay, vid. Christiansen, loc. cit.

¹⁴ AS III, p. 89 (q. 27 of the lay).

him. Goll duly dispatches his opponent and frees the *fian*. The queen drowns whilst attempting to swim after them on the return voyage. When they reach Ireland, the women are found at Brugh na Bóinne, because the whole adventure was a trick played by Aonghus. Upon finishing the tale, Oisín dismisses the crane in a single quatrain (146) without awaiting response to his tale. Note that the crane is alive at the close of the lay ; she relates her own story to Oisín and then flies away.

This type of tale where Aonghus, usually an ally of Fionn, plays a færy-trickster is almost always found in the later stages of the Fenian tradition. The latter part of the poem can be dismissed as unreflective of learned concerns, although the motif of slaying of the magical opponent with his own weapon, is a mythological survival, even if not necessarily a learned one.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is singularly inappropriate concerning the roots of the motif that it is Goll, who has otherworldly associations, playing the hero rôle. This should serve as a warning that the lay as a whole cannot be taken as a mere transmission of less altered ancient tales.

The life of the crane in the first half of the tale is similar to Aoife's tale in 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga' in plot, despite the difference of the rival versus the father as the agent of transformation. Furthermore, the name of Ábhartach appears in both, albeit in reference to the lover in one, the father in the other. Murphy long ago recognised that there is a relationship here, but did not elaborate upon his views.¹⁶ Ross, in her discussion of the crane-motif, having accepted O'Rahilly's origin of the *corr-bholg*, argues that the Duanaire Finn poem is based on a legend reworked before it reached the author :

Il paraît donc raisonnable de supposer que l'auteur travaille d'après les fragments d'une légende ancienne et authentique, concernant la métamorphose d'une déesse en grue, sa possession par un dieu, et la fabrication avec sa peau d'un sac destiné à contenir les trésors des dieux.¹⁷

When she proceeds to the other poem in 24 P 5, she finds that it has more in common with a long list of crane-women in Irish literature.¹⁸ The only exception to the greater fidelity of the 24 P 5 poem is that the legends regarding S. Columba and cranes suggest that the ownership of the crane by a deity, for which the saint has been substituted, was a part of the original legend,

¹⁵ Cf. *EIHM*, ch. III passim.

¹⁶ *DF* III, loc. cit.

¹⁷ Ross, op. cit, p. 429.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 430-3.

but that it is dropped in 24 P 5 because Oisín must meet the crane in his travels.

Ross treats these lays as different parts of the crane tradition and calls the story of the 24 P 5 lay simply a *second récit*. She does not mention the close relation suggested by the use of the name 'Ábhartach' in both poems. One must also question whether there are in fact two ancient versions of the legend when a list of several pages of evidence supports the details of the 'second recension' but never the first.

Only one conclusion appears : the author of 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga' has innovated. He may, or may not, have had some remnant of a legend about the particular treasures of Fionn or of Cumhall. That he had heard of magical bags, a common theme, is unquestionable. The other two texts that mention the *corr-bholg*, which precede the poem in date, read it as a 'bag,' although the exact meaning of the term is unclear in them, perhaps lost as O'Rahilly suggests. The motivation of the author is now explicable. A marvellous bag of treasures was associated with the *ríghfhéinidh na hÉireann*, and a tradition had grown around it. The item lacked a history worthy of it. The author of the lay explained the *corr-bholg* with the interpretation of the element as 'crane.' He probably had some version, whether oral or written of the type of story in the 24 P 5 lay. Ross appears correct to assert that the possession of the crane was associated with a divinity, as that appears in all of the early associations of cranes. It is unsurprising to find that the motif is not present in the 24 P 5 story, as it is not integral to the plot and can be removed easily in Christianisation. The symbolism of the crane, associated with tragedy, but also with associations of divinity, was certainly appropriate for the downfall of Cumhall, the passing of Fionn, and the end of the æra of the *fiana*. He thus used this interpretation of the word to create a learned origin-myth for the object, worthy of its position describing an obscure and ancient fragment of legend. This was done with all due historical care, placing the fragment of legend in both a literary and a pseudohistorical context that would satisfy the literati of the plausibility of such an interpretation of the legend and enhance the status of the Fenian subject matter, which was just rising to literary respectability ca. 1200 by tying it to as many worthy subjects as possible. In uniting the legends of crane and *corr-bholg*, the author was also highly successful in creating a work of literature that grafted an additional layer of rich symbolism onto the bag to create a summary and symbol of the history of the *fianaigheacht*. Such an achievement cannot have been an accident.

Prof. Nagy calls the *corr-bholg* 'This magical symbol of fénnidecht, alternately full and

empty of valuables,¹⁹ based on q. 14 of the lay, where the bag's contents disappear when the tide is out. The connexion of this feature to the bag's creation by Manannán, a sea-god, is not difficult to grasp. Yet it is also not without numerous parallels as a Celtic literary motif, including the famous bag used to trick Gwawl in the Mabinogi of Pwyll.²⁰ The wonder of the bag is not at root in connexion with the *fiana* at all, but it comes to be a powerful symbol of them. In the lay and in the other texts, the *corr-bholg* is clearly an object like a purse, used to hold treasure. In the quatrain of Giolla an Choimheadh quoted above, it contained *séit*, usually translated as 'jewels,' but also potentially treasures of the type found in the lay. Two of the treasures in the crane-bag possess mythological connexions, even if somewhat obscure. These objects are the shirt and knife of Manannán, the belt of Goibhne ; another, obscure object relating to Gabhann ('the smith'), may belong to the same, resulting from simple variant forms of the name for the smith-god or a different rate of modernisation of the proper noun and the common.²¹ The other objects suggest adventures : the shears of the King of Scotland and the helmet of the King of Lochlann would be items taken from those men. The last two are parts of animals, likely hunted. In this context, the *corr-bholg* could be viewed as a Fenian trophy case, displaying or hiding items from different types of adventures. To Nagy, this disappearing display sums the nature of the Fenian lays and tales, where learning and knowledge are asserted, but the reality of the places and names slips away as increasingly unverifiable, the phenomenon which chapter II of this study shewed to increase over time.

It is regrettable that the lay is imperfect, for it would give more insight into the author's view of the object as a symbol of the *fiana* and their adventures if the fate of it were known. At a minimum, it can nevertheless be asserted that the object was meant to be a symbol of authority in the hands of Cumhall and later Fionn, (perhaps also Oisín?), reflected by its earlier possession by Lugh in the lay.²² In this object, in the hands of the Fenian leader, were contained the tokens that verified the adventures of the *fiana*, and one may surmise that, whatever its ultimate fate, through this lay it provided S. Patrick with confirmation of the truth of the tales of Caoilte or Oisín.

¹⁹ Joseph Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw* (London : University of California Press, 1985), p. 96.

²⁰ Ifor Williams, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (Caerdydd : Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1930), pp. 15-8.

²¹ CB q. 11 ; cf. *EIHM* p. 314.

²² CB q. 16.

Other Sources

There do not appear to be Classical or learned Christian motifs in this lay. It draws directly upon only items of the Native Tradition. There are significant signs of learning from the synthetic historical tradition within the lay. Conaire Mór, who received the *corr-bholg* from Manannán as he slept at Tara in qq. 18-9 is a legendary figure, worked into the synthetic histories as a High King from A.D. 158 to 165.²³ One must assume that the passage of the Crane-bag from Conaire to Cumhaill, were the text not incomplete, would have involved further pseudohistorical personages. The history of the crane-bag allows for a display of learnedness in noting from whom to whom it passes.

The mythological aspect of the text, including the rôles of Manannán and Lugh, is not inconsistent with the general portrayals of these heroes or divinities. There is, unfortunately no specific learned motif that can give any insight into the inclusion of these particular characters. In general, it can be said that Manannán, as a sea-god is an appropriate choice to associate with a water-bird. His appositeness for association with a bag that changes with the tides and holds marvellous objects, as discussed in the previous section, is unquestionable. Lugh, later in the poem as a hero who is slain and has the *corr-bholg* taken from him by Clann Cearnada, is a literary parallel to the death of Cumhall at the hands of Clann Morna ; the use of the archetype hero-god in this position is highly appropriate, but scarcely very original. In all of these cases, figures are drawn from native sources appropriately for the poem, but there is no source in which the references can be seen to have originated.

Conclusion

The portion of the lay which survives is tightly constructed in its internal narrative, but has problems in corruption or rewriting of the frame, potentially changing the speakers, making it especially hard to evaluate. O'Rahilly's theory of the origins of the *corr-bholg*, whether or not it be true, cannot explain the creation of this lay. Ross' exploration of the origins of the motif of the crane-woman locates them much closer to the story of the poem of the dialogue of Oisín and the crane in RIA MS 24 P 5. Even if the author of the lay is ignorant of the origins of the *corr-bholg*, he understood the crane legend and found its associations appropriate to the subject. He is also clear in his knowledge of the learned pseudohistorical

²³ Cf. note d to the edition. Conaire appears as consistent figure in the synthetic histories ; e.g. *AFM*, s.a. 158 and 165, *Céitinn*, *FFÉ* II, pp. 268-9.

chronology. He also presents his characters in a way consistent with other texts in the tradition in his era. It does not appear that the scribe is attempting to record a 'degenerate' legend ; other texts from later preserve what appear in comparison to other crane-motif texts and legends to be earlier versions of his story. It must be concluded that the author is learned and creative. Drawing upon traditional elements, he constructed a learned text to add an additional layer of traditional symbolism to the history of an object already symbolic of the nature of the Fenian life.

VII : *Laoidh Scéith Fhinn*

The Text

'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn' is preserved only in *Duanaire Finn*. The poem is in a good state of preservation, apart from a few corrupted rhymes, and the text is suggestive of considerable antiquity ; the verbal system is more conservative than the version of 'Find and the Phantoms' in the *Leabhar Laighneach*.¹ It is not unlikely that the poem could be as early as the beginning of the twelfth century. The register of the poem is suggestive of heroic-tale language, and the metre is frequently ornamented with internal rhymes and alliterations. Considerable care has been taken with the language of the poem.

The poem can be summarised as follows : The narrator is Oisín, and the text opens with his lament for the destruction of the shield and then its owner Fionn (qq. 1-9). He proceeds to tell of the origins of the shield in the Battle of Magh Tuireadh. When Lugh killed Balor and beheaded him, he placed the head on a hazel, onto which the blood of the god dripped. Manannán felled that tree and had a shield fashioned by Lucra of its wood (qq. 15-21). Oisín then lists a number of battles wherein Manannán wielded it, until he gave it to the King of Sigear (q. 25). It then passed in payment for a poem to the poet Cairbre, who gave it to the Daghdha (q. 28). The Daghdha bestowed it on Eitheor, who took his name, Mac Cuill, from the hazel of the shield (q. 31). Eitheor's killer Sgorán obtained the shield and took it to the land of Fir Menía, until Manannán repossessed it (qq. 33-4). Manannán gave it away again, to Tadhg mac Nuadhat. From him it passed to Cumhall, then Criomhall, thence to Fionn (q. 42). Oisín then lists all the battles wherein Fionn wielded that shield (qq. 43-59). The concluding quatrains return to the lament for age, loneliness and the shield, which has suffered 'losgadh don mucaidh' (q. 50d), and a plea to God and Mary for his salvation.

Literary Structure

The lay's construction is simple and tightly keeps to its plot progression. The entire lay is the uninterrupted narration of Oisín with no dialogue other than that reported through him in the episodes. Nevertheless, the framework of the recitation to Patrick is implicit. Oisín refers (q. 8b) to Caoilte and Fionntan as the other ancients who also know the tale he tells. He also appears to react to the destruction of the shield before his eyes. The lay opens in the first

¹ Cf. ch. II (b) for an analysis of the language of this text as it appears in *DF* and *LL*.

quatrain with an expression of grief that the shield is *fó mísgeímh*, a somewhat obscure phrase, but one which unquestionably denotes dishonour, or, more likely, disfigurement. It ends the history of the object by returning to the same image, the burnt wreck of the shield lying useless on the plain, (q. 60) before returning to more general lamentation. The poem thus contains no dialogue, but implies that S. Patrick is present as the audience of the destruction and also suggests that it is Patrick's query outside of the text of the poem which spurred its recitation.

The text of the in-tale is strictly chronological, alternating episodes described in narrative with lists of episodes not told in a grand *prætereo*. The first episode is that of the final encounter of Lugh and Balor at the Battle of Magh Tuireadh, which unfolds largely through Balor's final words to Lugh (qq. 10-11). Oisín's third person narration returns when Balor is beheaded at q. 12. He continues through the second episode regarding Manannán's creation of the shield. A list of battles follows, which is not introduced nor set apart from the preceding text by any literary landmarks. At q. 25, Oisín pauses to close the section at q. 25a,b : 'Ag sin cuid Mhanannáin mhúaidh/ dot deacraibh...' From q. 25, the shield begins a historical progression of the men who possessed it. Once the shield reaches Fionn in q. 43, the style shifts into a list of parallel constructions, of battles and a summary phrase regarding each. The last three quatrains of the lay, following a transition in q. 59, are the typical Ossianic lament for the days of the *fian*. Lamentation for the shield and his own similarly broken state bring Oisín to turn to God in a Christian finale to the poem. These quatrains reflect the opening lament for the shield, which caused him to grieve for Fionn and thus begin to recite the history of his shield. The poem thus comes full circle to return to its initial theme and then to extend it through the Christian approach to God, the natural end for all things.

The Relic

The shield of Fionn is itself the subject of little actual description ; it is difficult to extract more than vague specifics of its appearance from the text. The shield is chalked white (qq. 2c, 42c), and it is stated frequently to have been made of hazel wood. Some sort of device or pattern must have been painted on it, as it is described as 'dath-chorcra doinn-dearg' in qq. 29b and 38b. Quatrain 20b further adds the minor details that it is gusseted and that it is lightweight. It also had magical properties. The shield, endowed by the magical qualities of the blood of Balor which soaked the tree, could not be broken in battle and caused the enemy to flee before it in terror (q. 21).

The author of this lay has given the shield a grounding in *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, and the details of the episode correspond closely with that tale. *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* has a double position within the Gaelic tradition as a learned component of the synthetic histories which explains the defeat of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but it also is clearly a mythological tale, preserving the acta of Lugh. The tale is thus important to the mediæval literati for the defeat and banishment of pagan supernatural forces in Ireland.

The motifs in the lay are not only from the oldest recension of the text (in Brit. Mus. Harleian 5280) but also from the Early Modern recension edited from RIA MS 24 P 9 fol. 65-97 by Prof. Ó Cuív.² The lay clearly precedes the later recension of the tale and anticipates some of the developments in that text. This lay must have had access to a strand of tradition closer to the second recension of the battle tale.

In qq. 10-1 of the lay, the defeated Balor addresses Lugh, asking that he be dispatched quickly, and that Lugh could earn the blessing due him from his grandfather :

Balor do cuingidh ar Lugh seal beag ré n-a dhí-cheannadh,
'Cuir mo ceann-sa ar do ceann cain ocus tuill mo beannachtain.
In cosgar agus in gráin do bhoí orm-sa ag fearaibh Fáil
is maith liom-sa go prap dhe i mbeith mac mh'inghine.³

The dialogue between Lugh and Balor in the tale is somewhat longer,⁴ but it contains a request of striking similarity :

'Madh cosgrach thusa orm-sa,' ar Balar, 'an tan beafair mo cheann
díom a char ar mullach do chinn féin 7 a mhéidhe do chur red cheann ar dháigh
go ndeach mo rath 7 mo rochonách, mo ghráin 7 mo ghaisgeadh sa ort-sa.
Uair ní fhágbhuinn dar mh'éisi neach is caradraighe dhamh iná thusa.⁵

Similar passages are to be found in orally collected versions, suggesting that this is an ancient part of the tradition.⁶ Surprisingly, there is no such passage in the other recension of *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, where Balor is slain immediately with the same stone cast as blinded him. No exchange between Lugh and Balor occurs ; yet the baleful powers of his head are hinted, as Indech, struck by Balor's head as he fell, is himself bloodied, 'co sescaind a loim

² Brian Ó Cuív, ed. *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1945).

³ SF qq. 10-11.

⁴ Ó Cuív, op. cit., pp. 53-4.

⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

foulæ tara béola-side,' 'so that a gush of blood spouted over his lips.'⁷ In none of the other versions does Lugh comply with Balor's request. He beheads Balor ; thereafter the versions differ. The Harleian MS version says nothing about the head. The Early Modern tale has a motif much like that in the lay, where the head 'do sgoilt in crann ar cheart-dhó' in q. 13d, but featuring a standing stone in place of the tree :

Beanuis Lugh a cheann de, 7 téid risin cceann iar sin, 7 cóirighis ar cholahain chartha cloichi móire baoi a n-athfhogas dó é. Goirid do vhi ann sa asa h-aithle an tan do sgoilt 7 do sgaoil an cartha cruaidh coimhreamhar cloichi i cceathra leathsgoilténuibh lánmhóra go lár.⁸

Lugh then tries again, placing the head 'a nglaiç chuill,' similarly to the lay, but it does not remain there ; for it remains there only until he has struck a foot from the corpse of Balor. Thereafter, he betakes himself to Magh Tuireadh again with both head and foot as trophies.⁹ Ó Cuív found that oral versions 'agree with [24] P [9] in placing the head on a rock, not on the fork of a hazel-tree as in *Duanaire Finn*, but it is clear that in both the literary versions and the folk-versions we have merely slight variations in a common theme.'¹⁰ The presence of the hazel in the Early Modern *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* in addition to the standing-stone suggests that the text was attempting to reconcile two conflicting versions of the legend. Although this version of *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* is later than the lay, the head is in that text clearly removed immediately, whereas in the lay, it is unclear whether the head was left in the tree. The presence of carrion-birds, vultures and ravens, in the lay's hazel tree suggests the display of the head there.¹¹ As the two do not agree, the possibility that the lay is the cause for the introduction of the hazel into the tale is unlikely. From the text of the lay it does not appear that the author of the *Duanaire Finn* lay stretched the tale or introduced a motif, but rather made use of a variant within the tradition in order to derive his object from the hazel.

The tree's power is exhibited by its effect in the attempt to make the shield, where it kills eighteen men and blinds nine more with its poison (qq. 17-8). Manannán has it fashioned by the craftsman Lucra. Manannán has a strong learned use in the Fenian cycle. In the

⁷ Elizabeth Gray, *Cath Maige Tuired* (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1982), pp. 60-1, § 135.

⁸ Ó Cuív, op. cit., p. 54.

⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹ Cf. SF q. 14.

previous chapter, it was noted that he created the *corr-bholg*, which was appropriate to his nature as a water-deity. In 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' it will be seen in the next chapter, Manannán is the father-in-law of Eanan, wherefore he is potentially associated with the dipper (SCA q. 71 equivalent to SCP q. 74). Manannán is rare in the Fenian cycle overall, and where he does appear, it is usually a mention in passing.¹² The tendency of Manannán (and his Brythonic counterpart Manawydan) to be associated with the creation and bestowal of magical objects in the rôle of the supernatural craftsman is certainly worthy of further study.

Thereafter, the history of the object seems an attempt to put the shield in as many places as possible, dropping as many foreign (or foreign-sounding) names as possible. It is in the province of the Cruithne, where it destroys the king of Egypt, and of Spain. Manannán also took it to Asia to slay her king. The kingdom of the island of Sigear is unknown, but it plays the usual rôle of a foreign place to have an adventure ; because it is *seaca*, 'frosty,' (q. 6c) it may be an attempt to make a name that sounds Norse. It is wielded by the Daghdha (qq. 28-9). After a battle at Tailte, a place with strong symbolism of sovereignty, it passed to the Kings of Fir Menía until Manannán repossessed it.¹³ Manannán gave it to Tadhg, and it thus came to Cumhall through Muirn and entered the Fenian cycle (qq. 36-9). Criomhall took it at Cnucha (q. 40), but Fionn recovered it from him, and wielded it through a lengthy series of battles which will be described presently.

The shield is an interesting object as a symbol. It is clearly a powerful object, associated with Fionn as the heir of Manannán, Tadhg mac Nuadhat, and other divinities, semi-divines, heroes, and kings. It carries from its origins a connotation of deicide and destruction, battle and death. Oisín both laments the destruction of the shield and yet is horrified by it, for only the forbidden tree in Eden caused more destruction and death than the hazel whence the shield was created (q. 62). The lay thus gives a more complex probe into Oisín's attitudes towards his past life. The tendencies are unequivocally towards the life of Christian penitence, but the emotional draw is back to blood and glory. The shield was undafeatable, like the *fiana*, in its time. In the lay, it has been reduced to a ruin and burnt, just as only twenty-seven *féinidhe* survived the battles of Gabhair and Ollarbh, and fewer are

¹² He receives no more than a half-dozen mentions in any recension of the *Agallamh*, and the only other place in *Duanaire Finn* that he is mentioned is the lay LXI, where he is used as a simple fairy-opponent with no motivation for his hate — an Early Modern motif which has been studied, vid. *DF* III, pp. 141-2.

¹³ This may be a corruption of Armenia, a possibility raised in *DF* by both Mac Neill and Murphy *passim*. The present author is doubtful and believes that the name is fanciful, cf. *Index Locorum* s.v. Fir Menía.

left as ancients. The *fian* is a ghost of itself, and the shield symbolises its power. There is no need for it on the part of the elderly Oisín ; he is a Christian, in the retinue of S. Patrick, needing to care for his soul, not his armaments. The latter are useless in the hands of an old man, useless in the hands of a penitent.

Learned References : Native

This lay, like 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga,' does not stray far from its plot. There is only one learned sidenote in this lay, a summary of the battles wherein Fionn bore the shield, and thus a division of the list from the less summarised history of the relic is somewhat artificial. The chief difference is that the shield does not itself feature in the list, which is a list of Fenian battles. The list is learned, and many of the battles are connected to surviving tales and lays in the Fenian cycle ; others give hints as to their nature by their themes, especially the slayings of kings of powerful places. Full treatment of the places and their possible locations is reserved for the *Index Locorum et Gentium* in part II. Nevertheless, it is entirely appropriate to give here a list of the battles and to comment on them as a list :

- q. 43 : Ceann Cluig, Món Mafaidh
- 44 : Luachair, Ceann Aisi, Inbhear Dubhghlaisi, Teafa, Cluain Meann Muirisge
- 45 : Luasg, Ceann Chlaire, Dún Maighe, Sliabh Fuaid
- 46 : Fionntraigh, 2 battles of Áth Móna, Cronnmhoin
- 47 : Bolgraihe, Achadh Abhla, Gabhair, Cath na bPunnand
- 48 : Ollarbh, Fathadh, Eisi, Ceis Coruind
- 49 : Carraig, Srubh Brain, Beann Eadoir, Sliabh Uighe, Magh Mhaland
- 50 : Colamhnaigh, Inbhear Badhna, Áth Modhuirn, Beirge ós Bóainn
- 51 : Magh Adhair, Dún Fraochan, Meilge
- 52 : Beirbhe (along with one against the King of Lochlann), Uigh, Innis Gaibíel
- 53 : Móin, Ceann Tíre, Ile, Saxan (England), Dún Binne
- 54 : Inbhear Buille, Buinn
- 55 : 32 battles abroad, including Tír na nDionn
- 56 : 8 battles in Leinster, 16 in Ulster
- 57 : 30 battles in Munster, 12 in Connaught
- 58 : 5 against the Tuatha Dé Danann

It is clear that the list is intended to be a comprehensive list of Fenian battles of note. It is, however, a mixed collection of names. Qq. 55-8 appear as padding, to contain the such further items which might come to mind with vague territorial coverings, and also to make the list more impressive by its numbers. The other twelve quatrains are more specific. Some patterns are noteworthy, even if some of the inclusions and omissions are due to metrics or the author's memory. The great battles that are the subject of tales and lays are all present :

Luachair, Sliabh Fuaid, Fionntraigh, Gabhair, Ollarbh, Beann Éadair, Beirge ós Bóainn.¹⁴

Some are clearly references to foreign adventures : Carraig (several possibilities in Ireland and Scotland), Ceann Tíre (Kintyre), Íle (Islay), Beirbhe (Bergen, Norway), Saxain (England). Several others can be placed in the literature. *Cath na bPunnand* is the subject of lay XXI in *Duanaire Finn*.¹⁵ The Colamhnaigh imply a conflict involving the high-kingship of Cormac or Cairbre. A few can be placed, even when their significance is unknown, such as Teafa, a district of Westmeath. Others refer to tales now obscure, but hints are given as to their significance ; Dubhthach mac Duibh was slain at Cheann Cluig, Deidgeal at Món Mafaidh, and Cormac at Bolgraihe.

Although not all of the battles can be placed, it is clear that the author was not merely inventing places as suited him, nor was he simply using such as made easy rhymes. He stops to explain the significance of many of the places. The length of this section is a further argument of its importance. The list of battles, not including those from before Fionn obtained the shield, is sixteen quatrains long in a lay of sixty-three. That is fractionally more than a quarter of its length. A list of such length implies importance. If the audience was not receptive to such a list, it would not be included. Instead, this list is not extraneous ; it fits well with the character of the history and indeed could have been a learned list worked into the text ; or, the need for such a learned catalogue could have been part of the impetus for the composition of the lay as a whole to frame it.

There is a second learned point other than the shield itself arising from Gaelic tradition worthy of note in this lay. In q. 26, a poet-prince called Cairbre wrote a *dúan mholta* for the shield, which then was a wedding present for the King of Sigear from Manannán. He received fifty ounces of gold and the shield itself as payment for the poem. Such transactions where a poet praises an object and then receives it are well known within the corpus of bardic verse. For example, in chapter V above, the case of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn's bardic praise of a dagger

¹⁴ References for all the places in this discussion are given in the index under each of these placenames, for which reason they are not duplicated here.

¹⁵ The appearance of *Cath na bPunnand* in this list and elsewhere (cf. list in Murphy *DF* III, p. 48) was not noted by Prof. Nagy in 'The Significance of the *Duanaire Finn*' (*Duanaire Finn : Reassessments*, ed. John Carey [Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 2003], pp. 48-9), where he suggests that the lay was purely the invention of the scribe Aodh Ó Dochartaigh ; Murphy's view (loc. cit.) was entirely opposite, for he thought 'that the poem is to be assigned to a date about the year 1200. At latest it can hardly be later than the 13th century.' The present author agrees with Murphy, although the interruption of qq. 20-1 and the oddity of the grief for Oscar in the frame of a lay mostly about Caoilte suggest that the scribe or a close predecessor may have rewritten the frame and interpolated sections into the text. Further study of *Cath na bPunnand* may be added to the long and growing list of desiderata for scholarship of the *fianaigheacht*.

(*sgian*) ('Mo chean doit, a Ghráinne gharbh') was discussed. Therein, Tadhg Dall obtains the fine object he praises, just as Cairbre obtains the shield in this lay. This manner of asking for an object is associated with bardic verse, and thus the motif suggests the work of a bardic poet working in a less strict metre. Its inclusion – which is an example of generosity towards poets that could not be lost on an audience – is less likely to come from an author who did not have firsthand experience of a laud as request. The motif is well-known, but no examples of it that are not the work of bardic poets can be located — a suggestion, although not a proof, of bardic authorship.

It is also worthy of note that the historical structure of the poem is episodic ; the history changes back and forth between list and narrative. Each period in history considered worthy receives an episode for fuller narration. In use of this construction, the poem has a strong affinity with the structure of 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Osair' and with the historical poem of Giolla an Choimheadh.

Other Learned References : Christian

The Christian ending of this lay lacks any tension between Oisín and Christianity. The final quatrain of the poem is Oisín's cry to God for his salvation. But the reference that precedes that is Biblical : a comparison in q. 62 of the lay between the hazel of the shield and the tree of knowledge as the cause of death.¹⁶ Knowledge of the Creation story is certainly not specialised knowledge, but placement of the theme in the mouth of the convert Oisín, without prompting from S. Patrick, is notable indeed. It is reflective of the short-lived attempt to make the *fianaigheacht* respectable by the churchmen who wrote the *Agallamh* ; they created a censored version of the *fiana* without the violence and anti-social aspects. This attempt at rewriting the cycle, as Prof. Ó hUiginn found, 'mhair ina dhiaidh sin [i.e. the time of the *Agallamh*, ca. 1200] faoi shaol agus faoi dhomhan na Féinne.'¹⁷ The usual pattern, becoming more and more evident over time, was for the *Weltanschauungen* of S. Patrick and the ancients to collide, with misunderstandings and a strong comic element.¹⁸ This lay thus

¹⁶ Cf. Gen. II-III, especially II : 17 & III : 16-24.

¹⁷ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanairé Finn,' *An Fhiannaíocht : Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXV*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1995), p. 50.

¹⁸ Cf. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, 'The Debate between Pádraig and Oisín,' *Béaloideas* LIV-LV (1986-7), pp. 189-202 for examples of the evolution. A stronger view, though well supplied with examples, of the humorous aspect of Oisín's character as a major part of his character is to be found in David Krause, 'The Hidden Oisín,' *Studia Hibernica* VI (1966), pp. 7-24.

exhibits a hint of an origin within a monastic context.

Conclusion

This poem is clearly learned, displaying a love of lore in the history of the shield, but also a delight in trivia. Most explicitly, the list of battles, extending to the length of sixteen quatrains, makes just over a quarter of the length of the poem. Furthermore, the general history of how the shield proceeded from one owner to another contains an element of this desire to catalogue lore, although it is broken by small episodes and conflicts.

The only learned major references outside of the Fenian cycle requiring specialist knowledge are confined to *Cath Magh Tuireadh*. The details demonstrate a close knowledge of the details of the tale, but they are closer in some of those specifics to the recension preserved as an Early Modern text. This lay appears to draw from a no longer extant recension with some aspects of both forms of the tale. Another sign of learning is that the lay contains a motif, the receipt of an item in payment for its praise, associated with bardic poetry. Since the metre of this poem is more elaborate and the language more conservative than that in most of the lays in *Duanaire Finn* – and even slightly more so than the other poems in this study – it would be hard to conclude that the author of the lay did not have bardic training. Furthermore, the fact that the lay exhibits habits of deference towards Christianity associated with the *Agallamh*, but which did not endure long after 1200, would put it most likely within a monastic context.

The shield, which protected Fionn and many heroes before him, is destroyed at the end of the lay. Its burning symbolises the end of the *fian* and its warrior values, as Oisín turns to an unequivocal embrace of Christianity in his decline. Nevertheless, its presence, even when dismissed with flame, permits the transfer of knowledge of its history and the Fenian lore, which enrich the present. Its past was, even if bloody, glorious ; but it is no longer physically necessary for the protection of Oisín or anyone else in the life of a Christian penitent.

VIII : *Laoidh Síthil Chaoilte*

The Text

'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilte,' uniquely among the relic lays preserved in *Duanaire Finn*, survives in multiple copies. The other copies are found within the *Agallamh* in RIA 24 P 5 (seventeenth century), and three late *duanairidh* : RIA 23 L 34, 24 M 2, and Renehan 69 in the Russell Library, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. The text in *Duanaire Finn* is unique. All the other MSS share in another recension which is more heavily modernised, but these MSS preserve an additional learned episode absent from the *Duanaire Finn* text.¹ Otherwise, the texts match mostly quatrain for quatrain, although rephrasings within the quatrains are not rare. The text in *Duanaire Finn* suffers from some minor rephrasings, but the other recension has been modernised independently and preserves some readings more archaic than those in *Duanaire Finn*. From comparison of the two texts, it is reasonable to place their common original in the last quarter of the twelfth century.² Except as noted specifically below, in which cases both readings will be given and discussed, the differences between the texts are of little importance for the interpretation of the lay. Those places where one recension clearly preserves a better reading based on rhyme, alliteration, or *lectio difficilior* have been noted in the notes to the poems. More often, however, the looser metre of this poem, lacking in internal rhymes, renders any judgement between phrases one of mere preference or even speculation. For the present purpose of evaluation of the learned construction of the lay, such evaluation of phrases or the attempted reconstruction of the common archetype is superfluous.

The argument of the lay is as follows, with the numbering of the A recension. (A table of equivalences of numbering follows the edition of the P recension in part II). The differences of arrangement of the text are only a few interchanged quatrains and a half dozen found in only one recension or the other, and there are no differences of plot of any significance between them. The narrator is Oisín, who opens the lay by stating his intention to describe the object which S. Patrick has just received (SCA qq. 1-2). He then proceeds to describe and praise it, then Caoilte (qq. 3-12). The history follows. The *fiana* were gathered at Assaroe, and Fionn

¹ Cf. part II, General Introduction, (a) MS Sources, for a full description of the MSS and their stemma. The *Duanaire Finn* recension of the poem is abbreviated SCA, and the other recension SCP from the best MS whereupon the edition in part II is based. A full table of correspondences of quatrains between the recension follows the notes at the end of the edition of SCP in part II.

² The language of the two recensions of the poems is compared following the notes in the edition of the P recension of the poem in part II. (The full stemma of the poem is given in the General Introduction to part II [a].)

divided the hunting grounds of Ireland among them. Forann leaves, taking a large retinue with him, leaving the *féinidhe* jealous (qq. 13-22). Fionn then goes hunting with eight companions and their hounds as a diversion (qq. 22-30). A boar is found and chased, but it cannot be wounded and kills the Fenian hounds. Oisín encourages Fionn to loose Bran upon it by listing the boars that Bran has slain (qq. 30-45). The boar is chased until Fionn and Bran overtake it, whereupon a mysterious churl appears and demands the boar. The Fenians engage the churl in a *mêlée*, and the churl defeats the party and takes all but Fionn prisoner, for Fionn and Bran have continued the hunt through the battle. The churl again overtakes Fionn and Bran, and demands that they follow him under *geasa* ; Fionn obtains the concession that his men will be released unharmed (qq. 46-61). They repair into a *sídh*, where there is a banquet. The churl becomes Eanáin, its king, and the boar is transformed into his son. Fionn falls in love with Sgáthach, Eanáin's daughter, and a marriage is proposed. A brideprice is agreed, and Eanáin also compensates Fionn for the trickery that he wrought — the dipper is included among the treasures (qq. 61-89). Sgáthach then takes the harp, and puts the company to sleep. Fionn and his party awake at mid-day at Bearnas where they started the hunt with their hounds restored unharmed and the treasures. The *fiana* are shocked by the tale, as for them, only a few hours, not the night, had passed ; nevertheless, the treasures provide proof of the tale. Fionn is embarrassed that he has been outwitted by the *færy*-woman, but in characteristic generosity, he distributes the treasures to the warriors and the women of the *fian*. Caoilte received the dipper (qq. 90-106). One day, seven years after, Guaire, the water-boy, dropped it into the spring at Duibh-eochair whilst fetching a drink. Attempts to recover it are futile, and Fionn declares in prophecy that it should be recovered by the salmon of the well, who should deliver it to S. Patrick, and that he would use the silver to make church-plate (qq. 107-16). Oisín finishes by assuring S. Patrick that this is the tale, but that such reflections give no comfort to his soul (q. 117).

The Prose Tale

There is a prose version of the tale which accompanies the lay in the *Agallamh* in 24 P 5.³ It is a later derivative from the lay ; it confuses the phrase *linibh láin* ('in their full number') found in both recensions of the lay, reading it is *leinibh láin*, 'in long surplices,'

³ MS pp. 376-84, printed in *AS* III, pp. 13-21. A translation (with notes and corrections to the diplomatic text) is given in part II of this study.

and then the prose tale proceeds to add a phrase about carrying purple shields that is found in none of the texts of the lay.⁴ It also contains a careless error of making Fionn thirst and send Guaire for water ; in the lay Caoilte (P and minor MSS) asks for a drink, or Guaire himself thirsts (Duanaire Finn).⁵ In both cases Fionn arrives to prophesy that the dipper will be found by S. Patrick in the distant future.

From the prose tale one may glean the valuable information of what the redactor of the 24 P 5 *Agallamh* thought valuable in the lay. As it appears in Ní Shéaghda's edition, the prose tale is 1,479 words, but the lay is almost double that — 2,470 words.⁶ The length of the prose is somewhat inflated by purple tendencies to add long strings of adjectives. Yet it is not the story as such that the prose takes as its focus. It opens with S. Patrick's request for the *dinnsheanchas* of the place Duibh-cheachoir Droma Dá Oss. (Which, strangely, does not exactly match the lay ; A has Duibh-eochair, i.e. 'the black verge.') Next comes the scene where the salmon fetches the dipper and prompts further questions, causing Oisín to relate a longer tale regarding how it got into the pool. Thereafter, the division of the hunts of Ireland, the warriors in each hunt, and the hounds of the warriors are described in full, exactly as in the lay. The lay's passage in the hunt is reduced to a few sentences, focusing on the list of boars that Bran slew and the *dinnsheanchas* of Gleann Teichidh ('glen of the chase'). The scene within the *sídh* is reduced only slightly ; most of what is preserved is the dialogue of Fionn and Eanáin. The end of that scene and the reaction of the *fian* to Fionn's tale of the scene in the *sídh* are not related. The end is abrupt ; S. Patrick gets the dipper, and Oisín remarks that crosiers and bells will be made from it thereafter.

It is notable that the prose redactor clearly understood the lay as primarily a learned text. He regarded the dipper, the list of hunts, and the hounds of the Fenians as significant ; he also concentrated his efforts on the *dinnsheanchasa* in the lay. It is the story which suffers the cuts — not the lore.

Literary Structure

This lay is both more learned and less literary than the other lays. The structure of the

⁴ Vid. note a to the translation of the prose tale in part II.

⁵ Vid. note b, *ibid.*

⁶ AS III, pp. 13-42 ; the lay begins midway down p. 21.

lay is a monologue by Oisín, but it is explicitly clear that S. Patrick is present and that they are at Duibheochair, where the dipper has just been recovered for S. Patrick by the salmon, as Fionn had prophesied. Only the introductory and concluding remarks are directly addressed to S. Patrick, (SCA qq. 12, 117 ; SCP qq. 11, 121). All the quatrains in between contain an uninterrupted narration in chronological order of the hunt and færy-feast. That tale is told in continuous narrative, but it is broken with learned interruptions to the flow of the tale on a regular basis. The main in-tale contains within it the episodes of the divisions of Ireland (SCA qq. 13-23) and of the enumeration of the hounds of the Fiana (SCA qq. 26-30). These are rather long and detailed, and their integrity was obviously important to the author of the text. The hunt then proceeds rapidly in the narrative until the men enter the *sídh*, with the momentary pause for the *dinnsheanchas* of Gleann Deichit or Teichidh (SCA q. 61, SCP q. 49). From (SCA) q. 63 until Fionn awakes back in Bearnas at q. 90 is found the story of the feast and wedding in the *sídh*. This is the only part of the tale where the narrative takes over as the primary concern of the scribe. The last section of the færy-feast when Sgáthach plays the harp is a set piece, which appears in early tales in exactly that form. One must wonder whether the descriptions of the feast and the treasures were also lifted from earlier literature. Portions of the narrative, such as SCA q. 68a *Nua gach bídh, sean gach dighe*, a proverb, suggest that there are traditional tale formulæ being followed, even if the details of them are now unknown. The final scene of the in-tale is contrived to allow Fionn the use of prophecy to foretell the coming of S. Patrick through his discovery of how the dipper will be reclaimed.

The closing lament of Oisín is entirely typical, and brings the poem full circle again, as in 'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn,' discussed in the previous chapter. Yet there is one difference of great importance to the extent of closure in this lay versus the others. In SCA q. 116 and SCP q. 120, Oisín has resigned himself to the impending destruction of the dipper, but it has not been achieved at the point of the close of the lay. The relic is still physically present and unharmed as Oisín discusses it with S. Patrick ; nevertheless it is made clear that it not meant to be still extant in the world of the audience. This point will be the subject of further investigation presently.

To conclude this discussion of the literary form of the lay, it can be seen to have two parts. The first is the motif of the relic frame, which it shares with all of the other lays in this study. Within it is, on the surface, a tale of a hunt leading to an otherworldly encounter. These are two of the most common motifs in all eras of composition in the Fenian cycle, as was demonstrated in ch. II (c) and (d). Closer inspection, however, shews that the hunt plot

itself is compressed, but episodes within it are told with great care. The hunt is something of a miniature *Agallamh na Seanórach* in form, a procession over space and time that is itself only a frame used to map a series of independent learned episodes connected with the places through which the characters pass.

The Relic

The dipper is the most complicated of all the relics in these lays to analyse. It must be approached from several different directions. The first is what the object is physically. Second is the use of it within the lay as a literary device. Third, the associations and symbolism of the object itself must be explored ; not least in the symbolism of the dipper is the assertion of its *Nachleben* in the silver relics of S. Patrick's mission, as it is intended to connect the dipper with real and extant objects.

The word for the 'dipper' is *síthiol* (and variants thereof).⁷ It is a vessel for fetching water and, as qq. 6-7 describe, for serving. The dipper's materials are described in quatrain 3 of the A recension ; (the reading of this quatrain in P is inferior) : 'Deutt, is ór, is gloinne gorm — gidhbé do iarr a fhios orm — / fionndruine is airgiott bán Síothal Chaoílti in flath-macámh.' Q. 116 also remarks on the gold and silver whereof it is made. The 'apple' of gold described in q. 4 seems to describe a large nugget inside. This nugget would likely cover the head of the pin or pins which attached the base, and was thus not unlikely to be of a significant size. Such constructions were not unusual. To take a well-known example, the Ardagh chalice is of exactly this construction with a very large hemispherical nugget inside covering the head of the pin whereby the base is attached and providing a further safeguard against leaking. If the vessel were only partially full, the liquid would have to flow around this nugget when it was poured, as described in q. 5. The nugget does not appear to be a stopcock, as a casual glance at the text may suggest, but it is rather a regular feature of the construction of mediæval Irish chalices. The silver pillars are the base, or columns attaching it to the body of the vessel. The difficulty is more in the unique description than in the actuality of the item. P q. 4b also describes it as having *slabhraidh-ghil*, 'bright chains,' which would not be surprising for a vessel that could be lowered into a spring or well. Qq. 6-7 (in SCA) suggest magical properties for the dipper, that it made the water into wonderful drink, or at least that it was not only water served from it. The idea of the inexhaustible wine-vessel is not uncommon among

⁷ Vid. note *a* to the edition of SCA.

traditions of magical objects in Gaelic literature, of which more will be said below.

Within the poem, the dipper serves most straightforwardly as a literary device. As the lay opens, it has just been recovered from the salmon by S. Patrick, although the reader does not learn that until the end. Oisín is therefore telling S. Patrick the history of the object. He begins by recognising it, then associating it with the figure of Caoilte. The lengthy description of it discussed in the preceding paragraph makes explicit the physical presence of the dipper at the time of the dialogue, of which Oisín's contribution is reported in the form of the poem. The dipper's history is then narrated at length from q. 13 until Oisín reaches the present. Guaire lost the dipper in q. 111, causing a futile search for it and a prophecy by Fionn that S. Patrick would retrieve it with the help of the salmon of the spring, which has apparently just happened. The events are told thus in the prose tale, which has simply made explicit the chronological progression which is implicit in the lay. Oisín returns fully to the present by addressing S. Patrick and concluding his tale. Because history in the in-tale extends to the events in the Ossianic narrator's present, the frame never truly returns ; the transition from past to the present is seamless. There is also a continuation of the history past the time of the narration. Through the prophecy of Fionn (qq. 113-16) that the precious metals of the dipper would be used by S. Patrick to adorn his bells, crosiers, and Gospels ; the afterlife of the dipper continues beyond the fifth-century time in which the narration was set, and brings these objects to the present of the mediæval audience, to whom the Patrician relics were familiar.

The symbolism of the dipper is rich and touches several different points worthy of mention. The first point asserted is the great liberality of Caoilte in distributing drink from it in the feast (qq. 6-10). This is a traditional motif of praise of a lord in bardic poetry, and also a motif well represented in the heroic tales. A fine bardic example of the cup itself, long after the feast, as a token of liberality and reminder of the fine drink distributed by a lord has already been noted above in chapter V in the poem 'Fuaras aisgidh gan iarraidh' by Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn.⁸ A second point is that the dipper is brought from the depths by the salmon in the well. The salmon in the well is a bearer of otherworldly knowledge. The ancient Fionntan assumed the form of the salmon and dwelt in the depths of the waters below the earth, drinking in the knowledge.⁹ In a wider sense, there is the mythological overtone of the otherworldly

⁸ Lambert McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána* (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1939-40), Gaelic, vol. I, pp. 114-7 ; English, vol. II, pp. 69-71.

⁹ Kuno Meyer, 'The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. Osborn Bergin (Halle : Max Niemeyer, 1907), vol. I, pp. 26-7, qq. 14-21.

salmon of knowledge, including that which gave Fionn his gift to prophesy the recovery of the dipper by the salmon.¹⁰ It is not inappropriate that an object with a sojourn in the guardianship of the salmon of knowledge is the cause of a learned poem not only about its own history, but which also records learned details about the *fiana Finn*.

There is another overtone, which is as important as it is problematic. In a simple sense, it is implied that this is an inexhaustible cup, or one that changes water into other beverages. Such magical vessels of food and drink are not uncommon ; one might think of those in tales such as *Cath Maigh Raith*, *Toghail Bruidhne da Derga*, or *Mac Da Tho's Pig*. In chapter V above, it was noted that in 'The Irish Ordeals,' Cormac received a quaich with the magical quality of breaking when falsehood was spoken when he attended a færy-feast which he had been lured to join by a strange visitor who makes him give rash promises.¹¹ Such tales go to a deeper level, and one might suspect a share in the motifs of the Grail quest, especially in some links to the Grail-quest motifs seen in *Peredur* and in the later Gaelic 'Laoidh an Amadáin Mhóir.' Alfred Nutt also asserts that Fionn has many features in common with these heroes, especially in his early life.¹² In 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' Fionn plays the innocent ; he is duped, first by Forann, who leaves with Fionn's retinue, then by the enchanted pig, and finally by Sgáthach, objecting to her father's plans for a marriage. The revelation of the dipper is in an otherworldly mansion, not unlike the otherworldly Grail court. In the course of the feast, the dipper is used to serve, and is the centre of attention, yet it, like the early Grail, was unsought.¹³ It is not the intention of the author to assert that the dipper is the Holy Grail, but it certainly has many points – too many for coincidence – in common with it. It is unclear whether this similarity is from the shared roots of the tales or from importation of motifs, but the subject is worthy of further exploration. It is definite that the Irish version of the Vulgate Grail Quest text is later, and cannot be the source of the motif, and that the Old French romance itself was probably composed slightly after the lay, but there were undoubtedly other versions

¹⁰ *EIHM*, pp. 318-23.

¹¹ Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword,' *Irische Texte* III : 1, edd. Wh. Stokes & E. Windisch (Leipzig : S. Hirzel, 1891), pp. 193-8 (Gaelic), pp. 211-16 (English), §§ 25-54.

¹² Alfred Nutt, *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail with Especial Reference to the Hypothesis of its Celtic Origin* (New York : Marandell, 1965), pp. 157-69.

¹³ Celtic motifs in the Grail legend and their occurrences have been outlined by Nutt, op. cit., pp. 185-91.

of the legend circulating throughout Europe by the twelfth century.¹⁴ Of course, the dipper does not share in the legend by its fate after the mysterious færy court whence it came dematerialises, leaving Fionn with the treasure.

The dipper thus touches upon several different levels of resonance. Fionn, sharing in origins with the simpleton Grail-knights, finds a Grail, the symbol of life and rebirth. As a serving vessel, it reflects the liberality of Caoilte and thus provides an opportunity for Oisín to remark on the nobility of the heroes of his day who gave away great riches. As a symbol of the lore that the ancient remnants of the *fianna* possess, it has a connexion with the salmon of knowledge and a sojourn in the otherworldly depths. In the following section, its afterlife as church-plate will add another layer to the rich layers of meaning, crusted around the dipper like the offered plates affixed on a relic shrine.

In the opening of chapter V, the adornments of book, bell, and crosier in q. SCA 116/SCP 120 were mentioned. These are a generic triad of Church objects, but also in the case of S. Patrick, these are the primary objects associated with him. William Reeves has noted that these objects of S. Patrick are entombed with him according to the Annals of Ulster, s.a. 552 and that a pseudoColumban poem on p. 119 of Laud MS 615 tells of these as the three important relics of S. Patrick. All these items also are found in the *Vita Tripartita*, mentioned in such a way as to note where they remain as relics. The prayer-book and bell are left at Imchlar at the conclusion of the second part.¹⁵ The Bachall íosa also makes an appearance early in the *Vita*, when it is delivered to him by the angels.¹⁶ Another bell is cast into the undergrowth, where it is found by Dicuill, who uses it in his oratory.¹⁷ All these objects have a traceable later history, as they were given to the care of various families, such as the Bachall íosa in the possession of the coärbs from the Clann Sionaich.¹⁸ The Gospels of Patrick disappear from history with little trace of their later whereabouts, although Reeves prints a tradition that the hereditary keepers of it 'assumed the official surname of MacMoyre, or

¹⁴ Shiela Falconer, *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1953), pp. xxxi-xxxii.

¹⁵ Whitley Stokes, *The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with Other Documents relating to that Saint* (London : H.M. Stationery Office, 1887), vol. I, pp. 170-1.

¹⁶ Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, vol. I, pp. 28-31.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-9.

¹⁸ William Reeves, 'On the Bell of St. Patrick, called the Clog an Edachta,' *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* XXVII (1886), pp. 2-4.

Keepersson.¹⁹

The Clog an Eadachta, or 'Bell of the Will,' has survived to the present, now deposited in Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann. It is an ancient iron handbell with repairs in bronze encrusted with layers of enshrinement in bronze and silver and gold plates ; the current shrine bears an inscription naming Domhnall, coärb of S. Patrick (elected 1091, ob. 1105) and Domhnall Ó Lachlainn (r. 1088-1121), and therefore dating from 1091-1105.²⁰ The subsequent history of the bell is reasonably well documented in sources, including the *Annals of the Four Masters* s.a. 1356 and several ecclesiastical registers.²¹ There is a second bell of S. Patrick, called Findfaidheach, which is cited three times in the annals.²² Among these mentions of the second bell is one in the *Annals of Ulster* s.a. 1012 ; in this reference, it is noted as being *do argut gil*, agreeing with the poem.²³

Reeves finds that this second bell is not mentioned after 1020, when it was stolen according to the Four Masters.²⁴ In the poem, q. 116, bells is given in the plural, suggesting that even if one of the Patrician bells had been lost, the tradition of at least two such bells was still known. Of the two known bells associated with S. Patrick, at least one of them, the Clog an Eadachta, was venerated as a relic in the twelfth century. The inclusion of the bells as objects to be adorned with silver cannot be a matter of chance when S. Patrick's bells were preserved, famed, and thus decorated with silver offerings on their shrines.

The crosier of S. Patrick himself is also to be adorned with the silver of the dipper, which is to be destroyed for its silver. The crosier of S. Patrick in Dublin was a well-known relic in the Middle Ages. Many of these references to it certainly predate the poem, and suggest that it was famous prior to the Norman conquest. The Rev. Dr. Todd, in his introduction to *The Obits and Martyrologies of Christ Church*, has treated the history of the

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-3 & 16.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 18-24.

²² *AFM.*, s.a. 945, 1012, & 1020.

²³ William Hennessy & B. Mac Carthy edd., *Annála Uladh : Annals of Ulster, Otherwise, Annals of Senat ; a Chronicle of Irish Affairs, A.D. 431-1131 : 1155-1541*, 4 Vols. (Dublin : H.M. Stationary Office, 1887-1901), vol. I, pp. 528-9.

²⁴ Reeves, op. cit., p. 29.

Bachall Íosa comprehensively, and it is not necessary to repeat every mention of it here.²⁵ It is worthwhile, nevertheless, to give a list of the citations of it in the annals as a suggestion of how often it appears in the written record. The Four Masters mention it s.a. 784, 1030, and 1537.²⁶ In *The Annals of Loch Cé*, it receives mentions s.a. 1012, 1014, 1073, 1101 (all as a relic whereupon oaths are sworn,) and 1538.²⁷ It is also in the *Annals of Connaught*, s.a. 1538.²⁸ *The Annals of Ulster* mention it in the same fashion as a guardian of oaths s.a. 788, 1015, 1073, 1101, 1157, 1167, and 1538.²⁹ It is destroyed by the Protestants in the 1537/8 passages in all of the annals cited here. The importance of the Bachall Íosa is further underscored by its placement at the very head of the list of relics in Christ Church that starts the book of obits and martyrologies.³⁰

Dr. Todd's history of the Bachall Íosa is summarised here³¹ : The origins of it are fabulous, for it is said to have belonged to Christ, and is sometimes also associated with Moses, as in Jocelyn and the *Vita Tripartita*.³² S. Bernard in the *Life of S. Malachy* writes of it as the item passed from one coärb of Patrick to the next as the symbol of the office.³³ It arrived in Dublin by transference by the English from Armagh for its protection A.D. 1178 ; the transfer is recorded in Giraldus Cambrensis, the Black Book of Christ Church, Ware, and the Annals of Innisfallen ; but there is another story about how it got there in the Bishop's register and the White Book of Christ Church, which Todd rejects on grounds of chronological

²⁵ James Todd, intro. to John Clarke Crosthwaite, *The Book of Obits and Martyrology of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Commonly Called Christ Church Dublin* (Dublin : Irish Aechæological Society, 1844), pp. viii-xx.

²⁶ *AFM*, vol. I, pp. 390-2 ; II, pp. 818-9 ; V, pp. 1,446-9. The notes to the last of these also mention another occurrence s.a. 1027, which cannot be found in the printed text.

²⁷ William Hennessey, ed., *Annals of Loch Cé*, 2 vols. (London : Longman, 1871), vol I, pp. 14-5, 66-7, 88-9, & 102-3 ; vol. II, pp. 316-7.

²⁸ A. Martin Freedman, ed., *Annála Connacht : The Annals of Connacht (A.D. 1224-1544)* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944), pp. 708-11.

²⁹ Hennessey, *Annála Uladh*, vol. I, pp. 268-9, 428-9, & 538-9 ; vol. II, pp. 24-5, 66-7, 128-31, & 158-9 ; vol. III, 624-5.

³⁰ Crosthwaite, op. cit., p. 3.

³¹ Todd, loc. cit. Todd prints all passages he cites, including those mentioned below.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xiii.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

impossibility.³⁴

Thus, at the time of writing, one could say that a portion of that object still endured in another guise ; the miraculous, grail-like dipper of Caoilte became part of the miracle-dispensing relics of S. Patrick, the hero of the age that followed, and upon which eleventh- and twelfth-century kings swore solemn oaths. The lay thus is actively strengthening the authority of the Church militant as the heroic successor of the Fenians with the blessing of Oisín himself. The connexions of this poem, preserved in Dublin MSS – and one variant northern one, *Duanaire Finn* – and associated with relics that were transferred from Armagh to Dublin is a point of interest for the origins and the history of this lay and perhaps the others. The point will be explored in depth in chapter XII (a).

In its broader literary context, the dipper holds a connexion with the font of knowledge. It has a form not unlike large early mediæval chalices in a style not unlike a Greek krater and resonances of tales connected the Celtic legend at the root of the Holy Grail legends. When the cup is recovered, the knowledge of many subjects is imparted to S. Patrick and to the reader through the person of Oisín. The knowledge is preserved through S. Patrick, who gives his blessing to the place in an act of affirmation of the value of the dipper and the lore. Just as the lore lives through the written culture represented by S. Patrick, although changed by its encounter with Christianity, the dipper endures in substance, at least in the assertion of the author of the lay, in objects both powerful and venerable. At the time that the lay was composed, S. Patrick had long gone the way of all flesh, and was reduced to the subject of remembrance and veneration. Although the veneration of S. Patrick is religious, not merely intellectual, it has much in common with Oisín, who is remembered through the knowledge in the verse. Since the relics of S. Patrick are secondary relics, they are capable of bearing this surplus of meaning and thus carry along the memory of the *fiana* in a physical form.

Other Learned Motifs : Native

Several other points in the lay present themselves as minor learned side notes that enrich the lay. These are the concern with geography and more specifically *dinnsheanchas*, the section that describes the hounds of the Fenians, the marriage negotiations, and the three modes of harp music. All of these are derived from earlier Gaelic models found in learned tales and reflect the concerns of a learned audience for whom the method of presentation of

³⁴ Ibid., pp. ix-xi.

traditional motifs was as important as the tale.

The poem has a general concern with the learned genre of *dinnsheanchas*, the lore of place-names. The concern is fairly peripheral to the poem's actual progress, but it is clearly a link to the early Fenian items in *The Metrical Dindsenchas* and the onomastic concerns demonstrated throughout *Agallamh na Seanórach*. The strength of this motif in early Fenian material was explored above in ch. II (c). This lay contains several places of note with associations for the *fiána*, but the only two place explained in full is Gleann Teithidh (P) or Sliabh Teichit (A). Oddly, Duibh-eochair, 'Black Verge' (A) or Duibh-cheachoir, 'Black Quagmire,' (P) itself is never explained in the lay. In the prose tale, it is given the qualifier Droma Dá Oss, but no explanation is given for that either. The author of the prose thus must have known or thought that he knew the location if he were to make the reference more precise. Unfortunately, this location of this place is now obscure despite other mentions of it in historical documents.³⁵ Two further places, Eas Ruaidh and Bearnas, demonstrate care in placing the poem within an appropriate symbolic and real landscape. The only other place named in this lay, apart from the lists of boars slain by Bran, is Gleann Deirg-dheis (SCP 63d). This is a superior reading to that of A, which merely repeats Deichidh, which appears to be a by-form of Teithidh/ Teichidh (probably a simple copyist's error). The place cannot be located, but it may have an association with the famous Dearth, an opponent of Fionn.³⁶ It may also be intended literally as 'the good red glen,' or 'the good bloody glen.' It suffices to say that this place is slightly obscure ; nevertheless, it is unproblematic.

The in-tale opens at Eas Ruaidh, (Assaroe, Tyrconnell). This is a very common place in Fenian tales of all eras. Assaroe is associated with færy encounters and otherworldly adventures in much Fenian material. It is unsurprising, as the falls are considered the dwelling

³⁵ Vid. Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin : Hodges & Figges, 1910, p. 371, s.v. dub cheachair.

³⁶ At least four men named Dearth are found in recension I of the *Agallamh*. There is also a popular modern lay ; cf. *DF* II, lay LXIII ; hundreds of later versions exist, an edition of the Irish text can be found (among many) in An Seabhac, *Laoithe na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath : Clólucht an Talbóidigh, 1941), pp. 130-6 ; Scottish texts are printed in Alexander Cameron, *Reliquiæ Celticæ* (Inverness : The Northern Chronicle, 1892-4) vol. I, pp. 202-7, 398-9, and 422-4. In the *DF* version of the lay, Dearth lands at Howth (q. 4), but it should not be seen as a surprise that the location is not found in many texts. Gleann Deirgdheis is an unsurprising name if it refers to a warrior, and even if intended to be understood as a physical description, 'the good red glen,' it is certainly not a surprising name, nor a unique possibility.

place of some otherworldly deity in many literary mentions.³⁷ In the first recension of the *Agallamh*, Caoilte visits Assaroe twice without Patrick to visit the *daoine sídhe*.³⁸ There is also the lay 'Eass Ruaidh,' an invader ballad associated with this place, in the Book of the Dean, the MacNicol collection and other MSS.³⁹ Bearnas is the subject of another early poem in *Duanaire Finn*, lay XIV. There, it is 'the Gorge of Balor's Pig.'⁴⁰ In that lay, the Fiana are drawn to hunt an enchanted stag. The theme association with both swine from the name, and hunting, from the text, are in keeping with the associations in this poem, as the starting place of Fionn's hunt for the enchanted boar. Fr. Hogan identifies Bearnas as Barnesmore gap near Donegal Town, and Bearnas Mór, encountered on the chase (SCA q. 46), as the mountain to the east.⁴¹ These places are also reasonably close to the starting point at Assaroe. The geography of the chase is thus appropriate, both in symbolism and in physical layout.

There is a list of the hunts of the Fenians (SCA qq. 13-23, SCP qq. 12-26). The list is interspersed with a description of the unrest of the *fiana* at the departure of Forann with their mercenaries, musicians, and foreigners. The hunts of Connaught, Leinster and Ossory are given in A. In P, q. 25 the hunts of Meath and Ulster are assigned. Munster is not assigned to any group (SCP q. 26). The list has a literary purpose, to send off all except Fionn's *gnathfhian* on different hunts. Yet it is told in great detail, without apparent reason. No connexion between the groups and their hunts can be found. The purpose of the list remains mysterious, but the importance of it to the author is unquestionable.

The hounds of the *gnathfhian* are the subject of a learned list (SCA qq. 27-30). The eight hounds in A are Fuilteach ('Bloody'), Échtach ('Mighty'), Gaoth ('Wind'), Eitioll ('Flying'), Garbh (Fierce), Fiamach ('Virulent'), Fearghlonn ('Man-killer'), and Fear Baoth (Reckless One). In P (qq. 31-4), the list is mostly the same, but Aithim (meaning uncertain) replaces Eitioll. Most of these hounds have names appropriate to them, and all except Aithim,

³⁷ Cf. *EIHM*, pp. 319-20. The Falls of Assaroe were also a dwelling place of Fionntan in the form of the wise ancient salmon ('The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill,' *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. Osborn Bergin [Halle : Max Niemeyer, 1907], vol. I, p. 7, qq. 19-20).

³⁸ Whitley Stokes, 'Acallamh na Senórach,' *Irische Texte IV* : 1 (Leipzig : S. Herzel, 1900), pp. 42-4, 197-203.

³⁹ William Watson, *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, (Edinburgh : Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1937), lay XXI ; Mac Nichol in J.F. Campbell, *Leabhar na Féinne* (London : Spottiswoode, 1872), pp. 130-1.

⁴⁰ *DF I*, pp. 30, 130.

⁴¹ Hogan, op. cit., p. 112, s.v. bernas.

which may simply be a later substitution, are obvious and transparent names. Fionn's own hound is of course Bran, who is worthy of a description of his origins in two quatrains.

This list is not without good parallel. One, in particular, is very close in theme. In the oldest recension of the *Agallamh*, there is a learned poem enumerating the horses of the Fenians in the same style of varied phrasings of a horse and its owner.⁴² The name types are similar, often simply descriptive. Thus the names Glas and Éachtach are duplicated in both lists. As the horses are a longer list, of eleven quatrains, it is not surprising that such common characteristics as names like 'Grey' and 'Mighty' can be found in both lists without direct borrowing. Such lists are beloved of the tradition, perhaps merely for the opportunity they provide for poetic description ; another list is found later in the lay describing in great detail the treasures that Eanáin gives Fionn in reparation for the humiliation of his men in (SCA) qq. 82-7 in addition to the list of boars described in the following paragraph.

Another learned list within the lay is that of the boars that Bran has hunted (SCA) qq. 39-44. The P list contains no divergences in the text of any significance. This is a significant list of considerable length, but with little elaboration of the importance of the individual boars. The list of boars is as follows (in A) :

- q. 39 : Between Eabha and Ros nGeidhe
- 40 : Druim in Eoin, Magh Glinn, Fionnabhair, Fionncharn
- 41 : Ríoghchoill, Boirche, Ros na Ríogh, Ceann Fheabhrat, Fuir, Uaimh
Sgannlidh (nine boars)
- 42 : Áth Néid, Sliabh Cuilinn, Druim Lighean
- 43 : Áth Lóich, Áth Cróich (nine boars), Cnamh Choille, Clochar, Druim ós
Bothaibh

The list differs somewhat in P :

- q. 43 : Druim in Eoin, Leamhchoill, Druim Lighean
- 44 : Creamh Choille, Boirche, Ros Áruigh, Ceann Fheabhraid, Muine, Uaimh
Sneachtuidh
- 45 : Áth Néid, Cnamh Choille, Clochar, Cnoc ós Loch Uipheir
- 46 : Áth Luan, Áth Cuain, Magh Glinne, Fionnabhair, Fionncharn

These names are given in the *Index Locorum*, and it is not imperative here to describe all of them as geographical locations. As lists, A is better preserved than P, which has lost a quatrain of names and has the near repeat of Creamhchoille and Cnamhchoille. Furthermore, Áth Luan is a *lectio faciliior*, as a common place. As learned places, Ceann Fheabhrad has numerous Fenian mentions in all recensions of the *Agallamh*.⁴³ This place is also featured in an early

⁴² Stokes, 'Acallamh,' pp. 8-9.

⁴³ Vid. the indices of Stokes' 'Acallamh & AS.

dinnsheanchas in Meyer's list, as described above in chapter II. *Corróca Cnámhchoill* is visited in the first recension of the *Agallamh*.⁴⁴ As Murphy noted, *Ros na Ríogh* is Slane ; an identification of a place well known, but also located on the Boyne, which has many Fenian resonances.⁴⁵ In lay VII of *Duanaire Finn*, *Caoilte* hunts for a pair of foxes on *Sliabh Cuillinn*, so there is some connexion between it and the Fenian hunt.⁴⁶ It would not be surprising, considering the close connexion of early Fenian literature and *dinnsheanchas*, if these names were drawn into the poem because of the *Fionn*- element, though derived from the literal meaning rather than the character of *Fionn*. The majority of these places remain obscure as sites of Fenian adventures, but the list clearly does shew signs of greater sophistication than mere rhyming of random places. Once more of the Fenian lays are indexed than are now readily available for search, it is not improbable that some of these places will relate to hunts and adventures. To return to *Duanaire Finn* lay VII, it is the one known as 'Caoilte and the Creatures,' which is also found in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*.⁴⁷ In it, *Caoilte* searches for a pair of every type of animal in a seemingly impossible task set by *Cormac* for the ransom of *Fionn*. Each animal pair is sought in a different place, often with an explanation of the name. *Caoilte* is also the participant in recension I of *Agallamh na Seanórach* who tells the most lore, especially *dinnshenchas*. This association is seen in many a later lay, such as the chase at the beginning of 'The Lay of the Smithy'.⁴⁸ Although the narrator of this lay of *Caoilte*'s dipper is *Oisín*, a thematic attraction of *Caoilte* to lists of places to which he is always running that are found so frequently in the lays may be a cause for the emphasis of *dinnsheanchas* in this lay.

At the conclusion of the feast, *Fionn* proposes to marry *Sgáthach* by offering a bride-price of a thousand chattels, a hundred ounces of gold, and a shield and sword for her brother for a year's marriage with her (SCA qq. 75-6). It is not specified in this tale, but it does not stretch the evidence to believe that this *Sgáthach* is the same as the teacher who armed *Cú Chulainn* in the Ulster cycle. If such an association is made, then she is indeed a powerful

⁴⁴ Stokes, 'Acallamh,' p. 20, l. 703.

⁴⁵ *DF* III, p. 399.

⁴⁶ *DF* I, lay VII, p. 20, q. 21.

⁴⁷ Incipit in the *Book of the Dean* 'Heym tosk zoskla fyinn' (lay IX in Ross's edition).

⁴⁸ *DF* lay XXXVI, and also common in later MS.

otherworldly figure. Even if she is another of the same name, she is still the daughter of a færy-king, and thus a most powerful figure. Sgáthach, when asked her view on the match, complains at (SCA) q. 78 that she and a huntsman are no equal match, but that she will agree to a marriage if her father does. In the next quatrain, her father 'naisgis a coibhche,' i.e. pledged her dowry to Fionn. A list of treasures given follows. The Brehon laws are clear about marriage ; it is not one type of bond.⁴⁹ These laws have been outlined by Prof. Kelly.⁵⁰ The year's contract refers to a trial period for a marriage, at the end of which it could be dissolved with penalties for neither party in the case that it failed. There are seven grades of marriage, with differences in the obligations (and also three types of couplings that are not marriage for a total of ten). The marriage here proposed is a marriage of equals, or *lánamnas comthinchuir*, to which both parties provide property. Fionn's actions can therefore be seen as an hubristic assertion of his status, which receives the withering response of Sgáthach, accompanied by her (fleeting) acceptance. The poet is thus sketching a situation dependent on an understanding of the laws regarding grades of marriage, and in which is described in the terminology of the laws.

When Fionn has won the hand of Sgáthach, she rids herself of the unwanted bridegroom by putting him to sleep with færy music :

Déargaigítear in iomdhaidh n-áin ; taoscca Fionn ina comdháil ;
 siris Sgáthach mar do luidh iasacht cruite in oirfittigh.
 In cruit cháomh sin na ttri ttéad gidh isséin ba lór a méad :
 tead airgid, tead umha áin, agus tead iarúinn iomláin.
 Anmanna na ttéad nár throm : Geantoir-ghléis, Golltar-ghlés oll ;
 Súantar-ghlés in gleas oile fa a ndeantís cách ciamhaire.
 Dá seinnti in Golltar-ghlés grinn do ríoghaibh in beatha binn,
 gach a ccluinféadh gan doghra, do bheithdís fo bioth-dhógra.
 Día seinnte in Geantar-ghlés glan do ríoghaibh troma in talmain,
 gach a ccluinféadh gan táire, do beittís ag síor-gháire.
 Día seinnti in Súantear-ghlés slán do ríoghaibh in beatha báin,
 gach a ccluinféadh – mor in modh – do beittís 'na síor-codladh.
 Seindis in inghean fhathach in Súantear-ghléas co gnáthach,
 Cuirtear 'na ttrom-codladh cach, Bran is in t-ochtar oglách ;
 go meadhón laoi – mór in modh – ro bhadar 'na ttrom codladh.⁵¹

The soporific power of færy music is an extraordinarily common motif ; long lists of citations

⁴⁹ Commission for the Ancient Laws of Ireland, *Ancient Laws of Ireland* (London : H.M. Stationery Office, 1865), vol. II, pp. 356-9.

⁵⁰ Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 70-5.

⁵¹ SCA qq. 90-7 ; equivalent to SCP qq. 94-101.

on that subject may be found.⁵² There are a number of mediæval tales and learned sources that make færy music have three powers, often performed in progression. These are stated most concisely in triad § 122 : 'Tréde neomthigedar cruitire : golltraige, gentraige, súantraige' ; 'Three things that constitute a harper : a tune to make you cry, a tune to make you laugh, a tune to put you to sleep.'⁵³

This motif appears in *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, where the phrasing is parallel to the passage in the lay :

Doluid an crot assan froig íerum, 7 marbais nonbór 7 tánuicc docum an Daghdha ; 7 sepainn-sie a trédhi fora nem[th|i|g|thir cruitiri dóib .i. súantraigi 7 genntraigi 7 golltraigi. Sephainn golltraigi dóib co nglosad a mná déracha. Sephainn genntraigi dóib co tibsíot a mná 7 a macraith. Sephainn súantraigi dóib contuilset ant slúaigh. Is de sen diérlátar a triur [.i. Lug, an Dagda, ocus Ogma] slán úaidib [.i. na fomore] — cíamadh áil a ngoín.⁵⁴

The same theme also appears earlier in that tale, when Lugh enters Tara, and the three musics are named, but the examples are not given in this earlier passage.⁵⁵ This theme is not present in the other recension edited by Ó Cuív.⁵⁶ The passage also occurs in the same set form in 'The Combat of Cuchulaind with Senbecc, grandson of Ebrecc, from Segais.'⁵⁷ Cú Chulainn plucks a tiny bronze boat out of the Boyne with its tiny captain, Senbecc, in it. He demands a ransom to free the tiny man. The man offers his magical shirt, cloak, and shield ; Cú Chulainn answers that they are no ransom, as he can take them perforce. Senbecc then offers the music he can perform on his harp. He plays the three musics, making Cú Chulainn cry, laugh, and then fall asleep, whereupon Senbecc proceeds upon his way.

One final example of the motif worthy of note is the musical contest in *Cath Maighe*

⁵² Cf. Karen Ralls-MacLeod, *Music and the Celtic Otherworld : From Ireland to Iona* (Edinburgh : Polygon, 2000), Ch. 4, especially pp. 81-4.

⁵³ Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges & Figgis, 1906), pp. 16-7, § 122.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maighe Tuired* (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1982), p. 70, § 164 ; trans. *ibid.*, p. 71 : 'Then the harp came away from the wall, and it killed nine men and came to the Dagda ; and he played for them the three things by which a harper is known : sleep music, joyful music, and sorrowful music. He played sorrowful music for them so that their tearful women wept. He played joyful music for them so that their women and boys laughed. He played sleep music for them so that the hosts slept. So the three of them [i.e. Lugh, the Daghdha, and Oghmha] escaped from them [i.e. the fomhoire] unharmed — although they wanted to kill them.'

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42, § 73.

⁵⁶ Brian Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1945).

⁵⁷ Kuno Meyer, 'Anecdota from the Stowe MS. No. 992,' *Révue Celtique* VI (1883-5), pp. 173-86.

Mucrama. Éogan and Lugaid encounter a tiny man who claims superiority in music, and they take him to Ailill. The small man plays the three strains as above. There are differences in the details here worthy of note. The man has a *timpán*, 'lyre,' not a *cruit*, 'harp.' But more importantly, it, like the harp in the lay, has one string for each mode ; only a total of 'tri thét ina thimpán.'⁵⁸

The motif of the harp music is more than the simple folk-tale motif of the færy music. It contains a theme found in Mythological and Ulster tales of the highest pedigree, and the terminology in the lay is precise and identical with that in the learned tales. Although the episode is not unlikely to have been borrowed as a whole, it is a literary borrowing reflecting a closeness to the earlier tales, probably in written form.

Learned Motifs : Christian

In P q. 121, Patrick's Gospel is given the eiphet *gan snímhce*, where A has *sgríobhtha*. The P reading is certainly the *lectio difficilior*. If the P reading is the original, it has a potential learned reference to indestructability of holy books, especially similar to the tale regarding the Psalter of S. Ronán in *Buile Suibhne*. Suibhne cast the Psalter into the lough, but it was returned to the Saint by an otter. The Psalter was dry and unharmed upon its return : 'Mo pshaltair doghabh 'na láimh/ dusfarlaic fon linn láin, do rad Críst chugum gan chair/ conar bhó misdi in pshaltair.' 'He seized my psalter in his hand, he cast it into the full lake, Christ brought it to me without a blemish, so that no worse was the psalter.'⁵⁹

Conclusion

'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' as a literary piece is rather loosely constructed. Beyond the usual *Agallamh* frame, in the interior text it rambles from one episode to the next with long digressions. The connexion of events by physical progression is broadly similar to the construction of *Agallamh na Seanórach* itself. As a repository of learning, however, it is a rich store. It features *dinnsheanchas*, lists of hunts and hounds of the Fenian warriors, a textbook example of marriage negotiation, and the learned motif of the three harp musics that is seen in *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*. The object of the dipper itself is rich. The object itself draws

⁵⁸ Máirín O Daly, *Cath Maigh Mucrama* (London : Irish Texts Society, 1975), p. 40, § 6.

⁵⁹ J.J. O'Keeffe ed. & trans., *Buile Suibhne* (London : Irish Texts Society, 1913), pp. 8-9 ; the full episode is narrated on pp. 4-9.

on traditions of hanging bowls and perhaps even the Holy Grail. The dipper, an inexhaustible, magical vessel, symbolises the generosity of the Fenians and also the generative power of the cycle itself as a literary medium. It is fetched for S. Patrick by the salmon of knowledge from the depths. The fate of the dipper is for use by S. Patrick to make items for his Church. The items named correspond with famous Patrician relics, and suggest that the lay was written to cement the Fenian legend more closely with the Patrician mission. Motivation to connect the Fenian relic to real relics, extant at the time of the composition of the lay, is likely to arise in proximity to such relics. This lay therefore provides a clue to its origins which will be further supported by the histories of the minor MSS. This matter is discussed further below in chapter XII, the conclusion of the analysis.

IX : *Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair*

The Text

'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair' survives only in the single copy in *Duanaire Finn*. The text is often corrupt, including two quatrains (39-40) in a different metre. The language is oddly mixed with archaisms, obvious pseudoarchaisms, and some portions that are clearly modern. The poem is likely to date from 1200 or slightly after ; it has a satirical flavour which suggests that the genre of the lay, and the relic lay were well enough established and familiar to allow for the conventions to be parodied gently at times, as will be outlined in reference to the sections on the relic and the motifs below.

The argument of the lay is as follows. Oisín sees that one of S. Patrick's clerics has the sword, and indeed apostrophises the sword in the opening line with the words *A chloidhimh chléirchín in chluig*, and then proceeds to tell of the violence that the sword had done since it was wrought by Tiobha (qq. 1-3). The sword is was in fact something quite close indeed to the idea of O'Rahilly's One-and-Only-Spear-of-Deicide ; it belonged to Saturn, until Jupiter stole it and used it to slay his father (qq. 4-9). Jupiter bestowed the weapon upon Dardanus. It thus enters the Classical world. A series of distorted or invented names and scenes follow until the sword came into the hands of Laomedon (q. 18). A scene follows involving Hercules and based roughly on the Trojan War : Hercules slays Laomedon and takes the sword. He gives it to Jason, and reclaims it upon Jason's demise. Out of pity, he gave it to Priam, but Hercules is betrayed and slain by it (qq. 19-32). The Trojan War begins in earnest, and Priam gives the sword to Hector, who wields it in the battles of the *Iliad* ; when he is slain, it passes to Æneas, who leaves it to Silvius (33-48). Silvius sails to Inis Tor and abducts Bé Milis as a wife. The text of the lay becomes corrupt and somewhat confusing ; Julius Cæsar apparently become confused with an earlier figure with a similar name (49-53). A series of invented names follows, some of which are ridiculous. The sword enters the Ulster Cycle as Lomnochtach challenges Cú Chulainn. The Ulster warriors quarrel amongst themselves and prove useless, but Cú Chulainn, alone, fights and obtains the sword, which he gives Fearghus (qq. 59-72). An invader-tale follows. Acall comes with an host of warriors from Lochlann ; Cathbhadh counsels surrender ; the episode is incomplete, and its resolution is unclear save that Fearghus somehow keeps the sword despite being forbidden to challenge the invader in q. 80d (qq. 76-87). Queen Meadhbh obtained the sword, and gave Irial mac Conall Cearnach it, who paid it as a bride price for a Lochlannach princess. Irial was slain in Lochlann, where the

sword remained (qq. 87-94). The sword returned into the hands of Aonghus through another series of inheritances, but he broke it whilst fighting a witch. Thus he bestowed the blade upon Oscar (qq. 95-103). A praise of the sword follows, then a curse on the cleric who has the sword in his belt. Oisín tells S. Patrick that he will kill the monk unless he departs (qq. 103-9). He then gives two quatrains of lamentation for the sword and for his son. S. Patrick closes the lay by remarking that he is touched by the tale and will pray for the salvation of Oisín.

Literary Structure

Once again the lay is mostly a monologue by Oisín, in the context of his ongoing dialogue with S. Patrick. S. Patrick is also addressed directly in an aside, q. 88. At the conclusion, S. Patrick does manage to give his two quatrains' contribution and reveal his presence in more than an implicit manner through his final benediction ; nevertheless, there is no active dialogue in the lay.

The lay is not framed as precisely as some of the others ; the narrative is sparked by the finding of Oscar's sword by Maol Chiar, one of S. Patrick's clerics. There is an implicit question regarding the origins of the weapon. Oisín thus finds himself reciting its history from the second quatrain to the hundred and fourth. At the conclusion of the history, Oisín becomes angered that a low-born monk has Oscar's sword. He beseeches S. Patrick to make the monk depart, and then he threatens to kill Maol Chiar if he does not go. He then launches into two quatrains of lament that end Oisín's share of the narration. S. Patrick answers that he has been moved by the tale, and gives Oisín his blessing for the information, praying for his salvation.

The long narrative of the history which is the in-tale is not a continuous narrative. It is rather a series of episodes, connected by a number of imaginary figures that bridge the gaps. These episodes are not a random collection, but rather a series in which the literary cycles are each represented. The first major episode is set in Classical mythology. The sword is forged for Saturn, and stolen by Jupiter, who uses it in parricide. Jupiter hands it to Dardanus, one of his mortal sons, who is the first king of Troy. By placing it into the hands of the Trojan kings, all that is needed to bring it into the Classical epics is a series of inheritances. Laomedon is slain by Hercules, who takes the sword, and gives it to Jason. It is thus present in the voyage of the Argonauts before it is returned to Hercules on the death of Jason. It is in the hands of Hector in the Trojan War and then Æneas in his journeys. The poem thus draws from the life of Hercules, the Fall of Troy, and the *Æneid*. The narrative thus strings together major

Classical epics, drawing a sketch set in each of them.

After the sword reaches Italy, there is a passage of rapid successions moving westwards, until it reaches Lomnochtach, who challenges Cú Chulainn. The episode is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Ulster Cycle in which Cú Chulainn defeats the foe alone, and the Ulster warriors flee. The episode is, as Prof. Murphy observed, a parody of the conclusion of *Fled Bricrend*, and the relationship will be examined at greater length below as a learned native motif.

Another episode of this type follows from q. 76. Another invader appears, and the men of Erin turn to the Druid Cathbhadh for advice. The advice that he gives is for them to surrender the sovereignty of Ireland to the invader without giving resistance. There is a textual *hiätus* here, for the episode of Acall's invasion is never completed. Q. 88, an aside to S. Patrick, appears to be a patch apologising for the lost conclusion of the episode. It is nevertheless implicit that Fearghus defeated Acall. The advice of Cathbhadh is an outrageous inversion of the set pattern of such tales ; there are hundreds of invaders in the Fenian lays analysed by Christiansen, but every single time there is a resolve to defeat the invader.¹

After the death of Ferghus, the sword sojourns in Lochlann, but there is not a full episode like the three Classical ones or the two Ulidian sketches. One might read the Lochlann trip as a recognition of the Norse invasions and scaldic verse as an heroic age also, or simply put the episode into that category of adventures abroad which abounds throughout Gaelic literature throughout the ages. It then makes its way to the *fiana*.

In each episode, the sword is given a new name. It began in q. 3 as *Crom Catha* 'the Curved one of Battles.' When the sword leaves the Hercules and Troy episodes, it receives the name *Uarghaoth* 'Cold Wind' from a giant that Æneas slew with the sword (qq. 43-4). It must be observed that the name is more fitting for the blade than for a giant. The sword changes names for the third time when on its way to Ireland, when it takes the name of Lomnochtach's wife, Caladh. Once again, the name is strange for a person, and the chief reason for her invention appears to be the name *Caladh-cholg* 'Tough Blade' that the sword of Fearghus had in the Ulster Cycle.² The name, associated with a person Caladh in the lay, is 'Caladh's Fury' ; its name is identical with that of the sword of Fearghus, which would not be

¹ Cf. part II of Reidar Th. Christiansen, *The Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (Oslo : Kommosjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1931).

² Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum 17. Jahrhundert* (Halle : Max Niemeyer, 1921), p. 701.

interpreted thus. Lughaine, a warrior of Lochlann, gives his name to the sword in q. 93 when he receives it as a bride-price from an unnamed son of Conall Cearnach 'in fad ro boí i Lochluinn.' Once the sword has returned to Ireland, in qq. 101-2, the sword, in the possession of Aonghus Gaoi Fuileach, is broken. Because Aonghus does not want it, he gives it to Oscar. Four quatrains later, Oisín calls it *Gearr na cColann*, 'Short one of the Bodies,' although he does not explicitly say that it has been renamed. Each section of the lay therefore has a different name associated with the sword. The device matches with one name per cycle. These names are rather strained in use and origin ; one cannot consider them as more than the author's inventions, except that Fearghus' sword Caladh is preëxisting, and merely given a very fanciful origin for a commonplace name. The naming of swords by people who have names that are just too perfect for swords hints at parody of the use of lays for the presentation of Fenian material in a learned context — the very aim of the lays discussed in this study to this point.

Oisín's closing follows the regular patterns. He begins by listing the extent of death and destruction, until his sorrows overcome him. The difference between this lay and others is that anger at the cleric who has apparently bought the sword from a smith's apprentice. A period in which the sword had been in need of reforging, or even sat in a pile of scrap-iron could be inferred from the indignation of Oisín. S. Patrick finally breaks his silence to close the lay and end the monologue before it degenerates even more from history to rant. S. Patrick brings the lay a balanced completion by recognising the value of the history, but also uses his bring Oisín back into dialogue from his anger, so that it can continue in the form of the ongoing conversation that forms the lays.

The Relic

The sword receives no physical description at all in the lay. One may venture to describe it as 'very sharp' (q. 100c) ; anything else goes beyond the description, or lack thereof, in the text. It is not possible to say anything about what type of sword it was perceived to be. The sense of physical presence of the object that reaches the reader is minimal.

The sword itself is an obvious symbol of power. Most of the lay places it in the hands of various heroes of the highest calibre, of all æras and nations : the Olympian gods, Hercules, Hector, Æneas, Cú Chulainn, Aonghus, Fionn, Oscar, and many others in between. The sword thus represents the greatest fighters of all history and legend. The sword was broken in

the possession of Aonghus, though still a mighty weapon (qq. 101-2). The weapon has passed into the hands of a cleric, Maol Chiar, who wears the blade (qq. 108-10), which symbolises the transfer of power from the warriors of the legendary past to the Church. In this lay, Oisín is upset by the cleric who wields his son's sword, and the transfer of authority like that which is symbolised by the changing of the relic of Caoilte's dipper into relics of S. Patrick, cannot be completed. The powerful blade remains in the hands of the Church, but the tensions that the transfer of it to a minor cleric of low birth raises are not resolved.

The fate of the sword is not explicit ; unlike the other lays, not considering the imperfect 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga,' the sword is not damaged further nor destroyed. The blade was broken, but it had been damaged before it came to Oscar, and this break (possibly, but not explicitly, repaired by reforging) is not part of its ultimate fate. Oisín's concern when he addresses S. Patrick in q. 88 is that the story of the tale survive through S. Patrick ; the value of the sword to Oisín at this point is chiefly a sentimental attachment. The sword does remain with the cleric Maol Chiar, with the intervening help of S. Patrick calming Oisín in the final quatrains. The history of the sword beyond the dialogue is unwritten, and there is no attempt whatsoever to make a connexion with the world of the author or audience. The sword disappears into the mists of time once the symbolic transfer of power, though resented, is done. One ought not be worried too greatly in seeking a deeper meaning for the sword or its fate ; the poem is a parody, though one that observes all the conventions of its genre to the letter. The symbol of force is all that is likely to have been intended.

Learned Motifs : Classical

The first section of the in-tale is the history of the sword through Classical mythology and the Classical heroic age. The text contains a large number of Classical names and sketches of tales. They are often too compressed for the exact sources to be found, although the families or types of texts that are behind the poem are not difficult to find.³ There is also the additional difficulty of an element of satire in this poem. Because satire allows the introduction of ludicrous invented names, wilful distortions, and risible 'confusions,' the departures from the models is at times large indeed and renders them exceedingly difficult to identify.

In general, the Trojan material is much closer to Dares Phrygius than to Homer in the

³ A fine summary of the state of awareness of the Classical epics and the extent of their use in Irish material, including but not confined to the Classical Cycle, is to be found in W.B. Stanford, 'Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* LXX, Sect. C, Nr. 3 (1970), pp. 33-8.

depiction of events ; this is usual for mediæval literature regarding the matter of Troy in the Latin West. Another source possibility is the summary of the Trojan War in the pedigree of Alexander in Orosius. Virgil and the Servian commentary – most accessible sources to any mediæval learner of Latin – carry the remainder of the burden. The problem, which is intractable in a case such as this one, is that there was already widespread interest in these texts in the Gaelic world well before 1200.⁴ Although most of the large surviving translations of Classical works into Gaelic are Early Modern, there exist some adaptations that are contemporary to, or predecessors of, the lay. A *Togail Troí* based on Dares is found in Gaelic translation in the Book of Leinster.⁵ Orosius' *Historia* contains the Trojan material, and it was also translated into Gaelic (with some additional material from *collatio* and the *Epistola ad Aristotelem* incorporated with it) at the beginning of the Alexander-saga.⁶ Despite the similarity of the material, if the Gaelic Alexander-saga were used in the composition of the lay, it would be highly surprising not to see an Alexander section in the poem, though use of Orosius-derived material cannot be eliminated as a possibility.

There is a further problem, which makes it a futile effort to spill too much ink in the attempted identification of particular sources here, and that is that the motifs need not have come directly from the Classical source. There are translations into Gaelic, and since so many have survived, there are likely to have been others. Once a text is translated, it is easily available for the lifting of details ; but texts such as Virgil that were widely read in the monastic schools could become the source of notes, summaries, and lists of names that could circulate independently of the text. Such lists raise the possibility that an author was working with the benefits of someone else's Classical education rather than his own. The repetition of a constant core of Classical anecdotes in bardic poems, as described in chapter V (b) above, provides evidence for such practices. Furthermore, the choice of episodes is highly similar to Giolla an Choimheadh's highlights of history ; it is possible that some names could have been gleaned from that source. It is therefore a better approach to the learned motifs in the lay to say that the poet, whatever his specific manner of gathering Classical names and tales for use in the lay, wished to select a number of Classical episodes that were engaging the literati of his time. The

⁴ Ibid., p. 35.

⁵ LL fol. 217a-244b, ll. 30820-32875 ; it is in Best & al., *The Book of Leinster* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954-), vol. IV, pp. 1063-1117, and is available as an offprint, R.I. Best & M.A. O'Brien, edd., *Togail Troí from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin : Institute of Advanced Studies, 1966).

⁶ Erik Peters, 'Die irische Alexandersage,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XXX (1967), pp. 86 & 101-2.

greatest number of translations and adaptations from Classical sources that survive are from the century after this poem ; the interest in the Classics had already grown, and there is ample evidence that well before the poem was written, men of learning were studying the Classical epics and incorporating them into Gaelic literature in a learned project. The author of this poem clearly reflects a concern of learning of his own age.

Several points in the lay bear slightly closer inspection. Among these are the deaths of Jason and of Hercules, and the intrusion of Julius Cæsar. It is also worthwhile to look into where the names can be found in the Classical texts — and to see how many are the inventions of the author.

There are a number of signs of learning, such as is q. 33a, where Paris is called by his alternate name of Alexander. The most accessible place for this use of name-equations and a number of other points is the Servian commentaries on Virgil. Dardanus receives at least twenty-two mentions and Ilus receives four.⁷ Paris is identified as originally named Alexander in them also.⁸ The text of Dares Phrygius always calls Paris Alexander,⁹ and there is mention of the earlier history of Troy in the beginning. Nevertheless, the link of the *gens Iulia* with Iulus is suggested by the Servian commentaries, where the name of Julius Cæsar is derived through Iulus and Iulius.¹⁰ There is likely a Servian link, but whether it came in a secondary source, perhaps already added to the Dares Phrygius-derived materials, cannot be known.

The Julius Cæsar quatrains (51-3) may or may not be original to the lay. Prof. Murphy regarded them as spurious.¹¹ Murphy was evidently puzzled by Cæsar appearing apparently as an anachronism, but there are no greater textual irregularities that might suggest that the quatrains are an interpolation. It is more likely that there is only a minor corruption, if any. It is not only the case that Iulus is another name of Ascanius in Virgil, but in an Old Gaelic fragment on the descendants of Æneas, Silvius bears a son, who is named Iulius, and who migrates westwards to become an ancestor of the Britons.¹² There are sections of text, such as

⁷ In the *Commentarii in Vergilium Serviani*, Dardanus is found in the following places : A. I, 28, 38, 235, 378, 380 ; II, 241, 325 ; III, 15, 94, 104, 107, 108, 148, 167, 170, 281 ; VI, 650 ; VII, 207 ; VIII, 130, 134, 285 ; IX, 10 ; and Ilus is cited in : A. I, 267 ; II, 166 ; IV, 159 ; VI, 650.

⁸ Ibid., E. II, 1.

⁹ § 6, 3 ; § 9, 1, et passim.

¹⁰ A. I, 267 ; VI, 69.

¹¹ *DF* III, p. 46.

¹² Kuno Meyer, 'Silvius, Stammvater der Britten,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XII (1918), p. 376.

qq. 39-40 in the lay which are later patches or are faulty, suggesting problems with the exemplar. It is possible that Séasair, 'Cæsar' replaced some other adjective through influence of his title of High King in 53d and that Iulius son of Silvius was intended. A second possibility, towards which the author inclines, is that the episode is not meant to be taken seriously and that the author is probably playing with the equation of Iulius son of Silvius and Iulius Cæsar. When seen in close proximity to the odd deaths of Jason and Hercules, who both die the deaths of other figures, it suggests that this is also a parody with a confusion meant to be egregious in a context where the pseudohistorical origins of the Britons would be as well-known as the conquests of Cæsar.

The odd deaths of the two heroes, Jason and Hercules, is notable ; there are far more obscure points that the author knows well, such as the material on the origins of Troy. It seems incredible that the story of the deaths of Jason and Hercules were unknown. Jason is described in the lay as having been strangled by a pair of serpents in the context of Troy. This is, of course, the death of Laocoön.¹³ In all Classical texts, Jason either hangs himself or is killed by a ship prow falling on him ; in both versions, his death is foretold and said to be beneath him.¹⁴ Likewise, Hercules does not die his invariable death by poisoned cloak and self-immolation on a pyre in the lay.¹⁵ There are many ancient heroes that die by treachery, but no tradition of anyone slain thus by Priam is known. Yet the story of his sack of Troy and restoration of it to Priam after the killing of Laomedon is authentic, even if it is pity, rather than an agreement that motivates Hercules' restoration of Priam.¹⁶

The bizarre deaths of the heroes are not nearly so problematic when they are seen in the broader context of the poem, or even the Classical section. A glance through the *Index Nominum* demonstrates that there are a number of names used that come from recognisable Classical epic, and a number that do not. The latter category of names do not appear Classical in the least ; no effort has been made to make them even plausibly Classical-looking. The lay certainly is the product of interest in the Classical tradition and has relations with many of the important Classical texts of the epics in circulation. The departures from the Classical texts

¹³ Cf. Timothy Ganz, *Early Greek Myth : A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (London : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), vol. II, pp. 646-9.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol I, p. 371.

¹⁵ Ibid. vol. I, p. 467 ; cf. CO q. 32.

¹⁶ Cf. Ganz, op. cit, vol II, pp. 442-3.

should not be seen as a fault in knowledge, but rather as a point of design, deriving from both a sense of freedom in interpreting the story, such as is seen in the dialogue of Hercules and Priam, and also from a satirical thread running through the lay ; the 'errors' are not errors that anyone could make without intending to do so.

Learned Motifs : Native

There are two sets of native themes in this lay worthy of greater consideration. The first of these is the extent of assimilation of the Classical or pseudoClassical motifs into the literature. Second is the Ulidian scene, containing elements of satire upon aspects of *Fled Bricrend*. In his new introduction to the second edition of *Imtheachta Æniasa*, Dr. Poppe found that the layout of the Classical texts in the Book of Ballymote indicated a perception of the Classical tales in it (including *Togail Troí*, *Merugud Uilix*, *Imtheachta Æniasa*, and an Alexander romance) as 'integrated into an incipient cycle of texts about Classical antiquity' with an historical focus, much like the Irish Cycle of the Kings.¹⁷ Poppe also observes that the description of the sword and general appearance of Pallas is an example of an Irish description that has entered into the Classical adaptation ; the passage is most similar to that which describes Socht and the sword in the *Irish Ordeals*, a text closely associated with the relic lays also.¹⁸ The free treatment of Classical material in this poem suggests that these tales of Classical antiquity and mythology had indeed gone native as a cycle, although the caveat that Continental scholars had begun treat the Classical epics in cyclical fashion by the twelfth century must be noted, for Continental scholarship permeated Ireland rapidly in this period due to the introduction of Continental monastic orders through ecclesiastical reform.¹⁹ Continental conceptions of cycles arising in this period may lie behind the growth in awareness of such groupings in Gaelic literature in the later Middle Ages. Nevertheless, several texts discussed below will exhibit nativisation of Classical themes to a surprising extent.

Another piece of evidence regarding the nativisation of Classical motifs may be seen in a fragment in the Book of Ballymote, published by Kuno Meyer.²⁰ This Old Gaelic text has

¹⁷ Erich Poppe, 'New Introduction to 1995 Edition of *Imtheachta Æniasa : The Irish Æneid*,' *Imtheachta Æniasa : The Irish Æneid*, ed. George Calder (London : Irish Texts Society, 1995), pp. 4 & 30.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 24-5.

¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

²⁰ Meyer, 'Silvius,' p. 376.

Silvius, son of Æneas, travel through France and eventually into the British Isles as an ancestor figure of the Britons. This tradition is reflected in qq. 47-50 of the lay, where Silvius leaves Italy to take a wife from Inis Torc, and the sword begins its journey towards Ireland. Nevertheless, the details do not correspond exactly with the Old Gaelic text ; in it, Silvius is a posthumous son of Æneas, yet in the lay, he is not.²¹ The motif has been nativised, but the Old Gaelic text is not likely to be the source. There has been another importation of the history of Silvius into Gaelic ; whether it precedes the lay or is done in it cannot be decided with any degree of certainty.

The historical poem of *Giolla an Choimheadh*²² provides more evidence for reading the Classical motifs as a cycle. After some initial bits of comparative ancient history, he chooses a small number of episodes to tell at length of at least several quatrains, whilst the rest of history passes in bare-bones mentions in between the favoured narrative sections. The first episode regards the exploits of Hercules, the next is Ulysses, then Æneas. The Trojan war is thus covered from several angles. There is a section of the ancient settlement of Ireland by Partholon and an exposition of the Mythological Cycle. An Ulidian section follows. The last section is the rise of Fionn. The poem treats all of these more or less equally as historical cycles. Biblical references are added for chronology, but the Bible, in sharp contrast, is not integrated into the narrative ; no episodes are drawn from it. The poem thus demonstrates the extent to which the Classical heroic legends and literature were seen in broadly the same fashion as Irish cycles as early as the writing of *Leabhar Laighneach*.

In chapter V it was observed that there are at least forty bardic poems that retell significant Classical anecdotes, although the range of texts whence they are drawn is limited. There are a number in which the details do not match the Classical originals, and this fact has been read as a sign of ignorance on the part of the poets. Nevertheless, ignorance is not the only explanation for unClassical 'classicisms.' There is a poem in the Book of the O'Conor Don, incipit '*Seanóir cuilg an Bhúrcaigh*,' which has never been published.²³ It contains a very long example of decisive action on the part of Hercules, meant to give anecdotal support

²¹ Elements in the Classical tradition agree with Meyer's text against the lay ; cf. Poppe, op. cit, p. 8, especially n. 23.

²² LL fol. 143a-145a, ll. 17727-18170.

²³ The poem begins on fol. 344a of the original MS, according to the catalogue of it by Douglas Hyde, ('The Book of the O'Conor Don,' *Ériu* VIII [1916], p. 93, § 301). The discussion in this study is based on O'Curry's transcript, now RIA MSS 3 C 13 and 3 C 14, because the original MS is not available to study. The poem is found in pp. 764-74 of the second volume of the transcript.

to the (unknown) poet's counsel. Hercules, seeing purple fleeces, seizes the initiative to journey to the 'Oilean na ccaorach ccorcra' (q. 18a). An entirely imaginary episode follows, which can have no source other than the poet. The treatment of Hercules is entirely serious ; the poem is a formal bardic elegy. This poem provides evidence that at least some Classical tales were regarded as tales of the same nature as the native cycles. Hercules was a character to be treated respectfully, but there was nothing more intrinsically unfair to creating a new tale of Hercules than there was in writing a Fenian tale. The characters' personæ had to be respected, as did the setting, but a new episode was not dishonest to the bardic literati. Other 'Classical' segments in bardic verse that do not match the Classical origins, such as the poem mentioned in chapter V with a 'confused' account of Dædalus, are likely to be other such inventions which simply are not so egregious in their departure from the Classical sources to the casual modern reader ; (most of these poems have never seen modern scholarly scrutiny).

The close integration of the Classical and the native material in the poem is thus reflective of an assimilationist tendency in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century literati, and this tendency was not without a strong after-effect in the bardic schools thereafter. The lay is thus reflective of a learned tendency towards the synthesis of history and mythology, even if its treatment of all of these sources is at times less than reverent.

The section of the poem set in the Ulster Cycle contains a great many different heroic motifs that have echoes in the Ulster Cycle, the Fenian tradition, and the wider literary world. There are only a few that are learned and reflect specific literary models ; these points also receive the most attention in length of space devoted to them in the lay. These will be analysed more closely here.

The arrival of the giant and the response of the watchmen, is a commonplace. Thus Lomnochtach arrives in Eamhain with the intention of killing the court at q. 60. As Prof. Murphy saw, the description is closely linked to a literary source, *Fled Bricrend*. The episode in that text is summarised as follows. Laoghaire is acting as sentry when a giant appears in the night. Laoghaire is tossed aside by the giant. The next night, the giant does the same to Conall. On the third night, Cú Chulainn is on guard. During the night, he is attacked by nine men and a worm of the loch. Then the giant appears, and Cú Chulainn confounds it by jumping around it, and so Cú Chulainn is granted the primacy over the champions of Ulster by this, the second contest in the tale.²⁴ The episode follows the same general pattern as the

²⁴ George Henderson, ed., *Fled Bricrend : The Feast of Bricriu* (London : Irish Texts Society, 1899), pp. 102-15, § 81-9.

arrival of Lomnochtach. It is also worthy of note that among the champions in the feast is 'Muinremur mac Geirrgind,' i.e. Muinreamhar.²⁵

In the second Ultonian episode, the section regarding Fearghus, Cathbhadh plays a prominent rôle. Cathbhadh is the druid of the court of Eamhain, who plays a standard rôle as prophet. In the episode of the invader that begins at q. 76, he counsels the men of Ireland regarding an invader. The invader that must be defeated is a common theme ; the advice that it is easier just to surrender is unique in heroic literature to say the least. One must assume that Fearghus comes forward and defeats the invader in the end, even though a textual lacuna leaves the manner of its accomplishment unknown. Cathbhadh is best known for a jeremiad : the prediction of the disaster that Deirdre will cause in *Longes mac nUislenn*.²⁶ Prediction of a conquest in his mouth is certainly apposite. The context of the lay, dating from a newly-conquered Ireland, adds an extent of black humour to the assertions that submission to conquest is not going to be all that bad a situation (q. 87). The connexion is suggested further by the inclusion of Naoise among the warriors who suggest themselves as champions to defeat Acall in qq. 80-1. One may also observe that some of the other warriors who ask whether they be the champion in this section, such as Fear Diadh, are best known for their defeats and deaths.

One further point is worthy of comment. The section of the poem where the sword is known as *Caladh-cholg* and is in the possession of Fearghus is based on the real sword of Fearghus, common in Ulster-Cycle tales.²⁷ The author of the lay, although he needed to create bridges to previous and subsequent owners of the sword, could freely import material from the Ulster Cycle with little need for change. The death of Fearghus in qq. 89-90 is also in full accord with the traditional death-tale.²⁸ Another name of the sword in a later section, *Gearr na cColann* (q. 106d, 107b), is also not unlikely to be a traditional name drawn into the text, for it is also the name of Oisín's sword in poem XXXVI of *Duanairé Finn*.²⁹ Yet the origins of the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 12, § 12.

²⁶ Whitley Stokes, 'Longes mac Uisliu,' *Irische Texte* vol. II, part 2, ed. Wh. Stokes & E. Windisch (Leipzig : S. Hirzel), p. 112.

²⁷ A list of places where Fearghus' sword *Caladh-cholg* mentioned is published in Thurneysen, loc. cit. The source of the name is discussed above as a point in the literary structure of this poem.

²⁸ Kuno Meyer, 'The Death of Fergus mac Róich,' *Death-Tales of the Ulster Heroes* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1906), pp. 32-5.

²⁹ *DF* II, pp. 14-5, q. 44.

swords do not match, for that blade was forged by the færy Lon in lay XXXVI, and it is a new weapon that belongs to Oisín himself, not to Oscar. The swords are different creative literary interpretations of the same motif ; it is no surprise that the two passages regarding Gearr na cColann differ substantially.

The characters and events could come either from oral or literary versions of components of the Ulster Cycle, and the lack of detail makes it impossible to find exact sources with precision. The references in the Ulster section do not display a manifest depth of learning, but rather parody episodes that would be fairly well-known to any Gaelic audience, literate or not. The transition between the Ulster Cycle and Fearghus is also a pastiche of heroic motifs and commonplaces of the tales (qq. 90-102).

Conclusion

This poem contains satirical elements, parodying the relic lays as a genre. It takes an obvious object, and traces it from a Classical origin 'myth' through all the epics of history. It gives the sword appropriate names that are derived in bizarre ways, and presents satirical retellings of typical heroic plots along the way in the episodes. The poem requires a model for its parodying. It assumes that Fenian literature is seen as a vehicle of learning — or flummery masquerading as learning. There is no sting to the ridiculous situations without a good number of relic lays, learned poems, and Fenian *dinnshenchasa*, and similar material in established genres. The poem must therefore come at the tail end of the tradition of learned *fianaigheacht*, which goes into decline by the thirteenth century. Yet this poem, over-the-top with its learning and pseudolearning, casually drops hundreds of references to the heroic literature of not only Gaeldom, but also Greece and Rome. The Classical scholarship hinted by the structure of the Classical sections is that of Continentally-influenced readings of the Classics of the type popular in the twelfth century. This point will be analysed further in chapter XII. The poem that mocks the learned strand in *fianaigheacht* is ironically the most learned Fenian poem of all.

X : *Laoidh Colga Chaoilti*

The Text

'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' is preserved only in *Duanaire Finn*. Of the lays in this study, this is potentially the earliest of them. Prof. Murphy dated this poem to ca. 1150, and the reëvaluation undertaken in this study has reached the same conclusion.¹ The text of the lay as it appears in the MS bears many signs of evolution. The number of metrically faulty lines is high, and many of them appear to be the result of careless modernisation (e.g. q. 30b, a hypersyllabic line easily repaired by replacing a modern analytic verb and subject pronoun with the synthetic verb). Qq. 53-9 are slightly suspect ; the language of them is somewhat more modern than the rest of the lay, but the motifs used in this closing frame are almost identical to 'Laoidh Scéith Fhinn' and 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair.' Although Murphy thought that they were a later addition, or at least heavily rewritten at a later period, they are perfectly in keeping in the progression of motifs used to close the lay found in the other lays in this study. The quatrains will be accepted for the literary discussion with this caveat, for even if they are not original, they perform a function which is paralleled in the other lays and therefore are at a minimum sensitive to the original intent.

The argument of the lay is as follows. Oisín is gazing upon the recently unearthed sword of Caoilte. He laments the passing of Caoilte, and the thousands whom the sword killed in various battles (qq. 1-5). Oisín outlines some of the famous battles wherein it was used, including *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, the invader Liath, the son of Lughaidh, and its use against the *fiana* by Conan (qq. 6-10). The sword was given by the hag Iris to Sithbhac. (Oisín makes an aside that the sword is in a sorry state, hardly like it had been). Thereafter follows a series of inheritances and givings of the blade until it reaches Fionn in q. 16 after passing through the hands of Tréanmhór and Cumhall. He, reminded that he was too nobly generous to hoard treasure, offers it to the *féinidhe* (qq. 17-20). Not knowing how best to award the blade, he asks Ailbhe. She suggests a race (qq. 20-5). Fionn runs his own race, and grasps the sword by the the scabbard at the same time that Caoilte takes the hilt in hand. They take the matter again to Ailbhe for its resolution with the additional agreement that the matter could be appealed to Fíthiol, Cormac's chief judge. Ailbhe rewards the sword to Caoilte on the grounds that the golden-rimmed scabbard belongs with the sword, not the other way around (qq. 26-35). Fionn, desiring his father's sword, starts to offer treasures to Caoilte for its return. The

¹ *DF* III, pp. 107-8 ; concluding linguistic summary to the edition of the poem in part II.

tension is relieved by the sudden appearance of Cormac with his judges Fíthiol and Flaithrí. They decide to put the royal judges to the test, and to hide Ailbhe's judgment and reárgue the case (qq. 36-9). Ailbhe's judgement is confirmed by the royal party, but the legal matters do not come to a close. Cormac himself has a case which he desires to be settled by Fionn and Ailbhe. Cormac's garden at Áth Liag was eaten by the goats of Fíthiol, despite the presence of a goatherd from whom they strayed. But Cormac has a gardener, meant to keep animals out of the garden. Ailbhe judges that the liability falls on Cormac's gardener, who has done his job negligently ; Fionn confirms the judgement (40-47). Cormac, pleased by the resolution, invites the *fian* to join him in a feast at Tara and gives him gifts (48-52).

In the closing section, Oisín praises the kingship of Cormac and of Fionn, including the *fir flatha* manifested in the fruits of the land. He then laments the sorry state of Ireland after their passing as a land of rogues, thieves, false kings, and hypocritical clerics who please neither God nor man. The final quatrain returns to the sword at hand, and Oisín's sorrows overcome him with tears.

Literary Structure

The lay is in its entirety a monologue of Oisín, as always in the context of his ongoing dialogues with S. Patrick. At the beginning, Oisín is prompted into description of the blade by its unearthing in the place where Caoilte had buried it. He then begins to list how many Caoilte slew with the blade. The progression of the early portion of the history of the sword, qq. 6-10, does not appear to be chronological. The general sense is that these are a series of highlights, and that Oisín is laying the stage before embarking on the history. The chronological portion of the lay begins as a history in q. 11. As the text stands, the transition is rather unsatisfactory, and one may suspect the loss of one or more quatrains in this section of the lay because the actual origin of the sword is never stated. It only takes four quatrains for the sword to reach Tréanmhór, Fionn's grandfather. It is inherited by Cumhall, and avoids being taken in his defeat by being passed to Criomhall, who gives it to Fionn. The history of the sword is thus only a small portion of the lay, a necessary part, but hardly a focal point ; there are no episodes in the history as there are in the lays of Oscar's sword or Fionn's shield.

At quatrain 16, the serious body of the lay begins. The *fiana* demand that Fionn prove his generosity by giving away the sword. At this point two legal cases consecutively take over the lay as its primary episodes. In the first, there is a contest, resulting in a tie between Caoilte and Fionn, and the matter must be decided legally. Ailbhe inghean Chormaic is the judge, but

just as she has settled the case, Cormac and his two chief judges appear. The case is replayed for the royal party without telling them of Ailbhe's decision. The king's justice matches and proves true. The plot contains the twist that the king and his judges were in fact seeking Fionn and Ailbhe to settle a dispute between Fíthiol and Cormac. Ailbhe and Fionn decide the case in the same way. Both these cases are unusual, dependent on technicalities, and there is a joy in the descriptions of the legal points, as will be explored further below.

The conflicts are resolved and the *fiana* proceed to a royal feast prepared for them, symbolising the balanced and just state of Cormac's reign. This gives Oisín the opportunity to compare the days long ago with the injustice of the present. He is especially bitter about hypocrite clerics, but he is prophesying their future practices. This last section of laments is certainly not alien to the form of the Ossianic laments, but it is odd in placing a prophecy into Oisín's mouth. The language is more modern, and that fact renders the end portion of lamentation suspect. The final quatrain returns to the relic, leaving Oisín torn between his memory of a golden past and his present infirmity. The closing quatrain is exactly of the type that closes the other lays (apart from the missing ending of 'Laoidh an Chorr-bholga') ; it may be that qq. 54-8 are an interpolation and the final quatrain is original, for its fit to the relic-lay form is perfect.

The progression of the lay is thus more stream-of-consciousness than historical narrative. The beginning, including the snippet of history is Oisín gathering steam for the main thrust. The lay's *raison d'être* is clearly to relate the legal anecdota. A secondary point is the opportunity to gripe about lax clerical practices in the end. The lay is a monologue with a logical progression from one theme to the next, but it has no broader structure at all. It tries to bring the lay back to its starting point of the relic only in the final quatrain that reflects the first, but there is no sequence of events to lead the audience in a full circle.

The Relic

The sword is not described directly, but in the dispute between Caoilte and Fionn some points of its construction are given. It is richly ornamented, and its scabbard has a golden rim with sixty ounces of gold in it. (qq. 33-5). The scabbard was fashioned by Iollann (q. 35b), but the name is common in Gaelic literature, and no famous craftsman, real or mythological, can be found who corresponds exactly with the one in the lay. It is notable that the name of the craftsman is mentioned as a minor detail, but that the history, beginning in q. 16, does not stretch back to the origins of the sword at all.

One interesting point about the blade is found halfway through the text of the lay, and shews signs of learning, or at a minimum, astute observation by the author. The blade is described in q. 12b as *in cruaidh-chlaisleathan cóimhneart*, 'the hard wide-grooved one so strong.' Swords in the Middle Ages did not have blood-grooves like those on a bayonet or buck-knife, which would be the reading of *clais-* in its basic meaning. The word must mean 'striped' in the context of a sword blade. This is not unlikely to be a description of what is traditionally known as a 'damascened' blade and more recently and precisely as a 'pattern-welded blade,' in which a striped or herringboned pattern of different types of iron with higher and lower carbon content can be seen. The practice declined after the ninth century when different ores began to be smelted, yielding a different quality of iron.² Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that techniques of pattern-welding were known to only a few elite smiths, and their work often traveled far, including most high-quality Anglo-Saxon and Viking blades. The process may itself be of Celtic origin.³ Since the poem is from ca. 1200, such swords were not being produced in significant numbers, if at all. The author of the lay therefore probably has observed the different appearance of the metal in high-quality swords from centuries before his time from the uniform sheen of the High Mediæval sword made of one iron only. It is also possible that he has borrowed the epithet from an older source, but the present author has been unable to locate any such description of a blade in Old Gaelic literature ; having seen a number of such blades in Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann and the National Museum of Scotland with patterns still visible after centuries of rust, he is inclined to favour direct observation as the source of the description.

The sword, at the time of Oisín's narration, is a rusted ruin. In the opening of the lay, it is unearthed. A buried sword, affected by years of damp, cannot be in any condition for use. That fact is confirmed in the aside at q. 11c, where Oisín remarks that '*mairidh fa chruth gan a gné*' : it is a rusty wreck. It is never said at the conclusion what the fate of the sword will be, but it hardly needs to be. The sword is a worthless bit of rusted iron. It cannot be used for anything. It is not worthy of any preservation. It saddens Oisín that the sword has faded from its past glories, just as Caoilte has died an old man and Oisín himself is blind, weak, and grey with few mortal days left to live. The fading of the physical sword that shared in the glories of the Fenian adventures is thus symbolic of the passing of the glory of the *féinidhe* who wielded

² Cf. Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd (revised) ed. (Woodbridge : Boydell, 1994), gen. discussion pp. 23-32, plate p. 217, forging method, pp. 218-24.

³ Ibid., p. 34-5.

it.

There remains one question regarding the symbolism of the sword, whereto there is no apparent answer. In this lay, Oisín always speaks of the sword as that of Caoilte, who was indeed its final owner. Yet the history of the sword would make it seem a likely symbol of the *ríghfhéinidh*, as it had belonged to Tréanmhór and Cumhall in addition to Fionn. Caoilte only won it in a disputed contest, and Oisín has little to say about the doughty deeds of Caoilte in the lay — only his 'warm-up' at the beginning. Caoilte is Oisín's cousin, but that seems a minor point when the sword had belonged to Oisín's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. There is nothing in the lay that answers why the symbolism has been taken in a direction divergent from the natural flow of the history of the object.

Learned Motifs : Native

The lay is rich in legal motifs, centred around the two cases. The cases themselves are not described in any detail, but the author is clearly relishing the chance to play with technicalities in the law and give surprising results. The author is clearly familiar with the language of legal formulæ in places such as qq. 37-8 with phrases such as *ceart na caingne*, 'settlement of the claim' (q. 38c). Use of legal terminology is not in itself a learned motif, but it is necessary for a work that wishes to present learned legal points to understand the precise use of the words in legal terminology. The procedures of both cases, though compressed, appear correct.⁴

The first case, the race, is a set-up for the presentation of Ailbhe's verdict ; the specifics of the race are unimportant, except that they must lead to a disputed result, where the sword and its scabbard, the prize, are grasped at the same time. The decision of Ailbhe in qq. 32-3 is about the relation of objects, '*...dlighidh choidheamh a thruaill*,' 'a sword deserves its scabbard.' This maxim has a very strong resemblance to one of the most famous legal decisions in history, the finding against Columba for the copying of the Cathach :

Is andsin ruc Diarmaid an breth, oirrdearc .i. 'le gach boin a boinin,' .i. a laogh 7 'le gach lebhur a leabrán, 7 da reir sin, is le Finden an leabur do srib tusa, a C[oluim]. C[ille]. ar Diarmaid.⁵

The same tale is found in *Céitinn* in a summarised form, but preserving the maxim almost

⁴ Cf. Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 190-9.

⁵ Manus O'Donnell, *Betha Colaim Chille : Life of Columcille Compiled by Manus O'Donnell in 1532*, edd. A. O'Kelleher & G. Schoepperle (Urbana, Illinois : University of Illinois Press, 1918), p. 178, § 168.

verbatim.⁶ The decision of Ailbhe is thus a reflection of one of the most well-known judgements in legal history, but the resolution is opposite. Diarmait's judgement against Colum Cille was unjust and caused the battle of Cúl Dreimhne : the judgement of Ailbhe is in fact a just resolution of the case. Although Fionn is not pleased, he recognises that it is fair and proceeds to attempt to buy the sword back (qq. 35-6).

Appeal to a second judge for confirmation is also known in the *Irish Ordeals*. The steward sues Socht for the sword that he claims (unjustly) is his own. The suit is heard by Fíthiol who accepts Socht's oath that it is his, but the steward appeals to Cormac. New evidence comes to light, in the form of an inscription that the steward had written on it secretly, causing him to win the sword. Socht then responds that the sword had been found stuck in the corpse of his grandfather, and receives the honour-price for his grandfather, which is not only restitution of the sword, but also seven cumhals.⁷

The second case, the dispute of Cormac and Fíthiol, is a case that hinges on a technicality. Fíthiol's goats have committed an offence in damaging the garden, and the law of distraint applies. The technicality is that attempts to drive away the goats have not been done, and so Cormac's claim against Fíthiol does not obtain. Rather, Cormac is entitled to damages from the gardener, who has been negligent in his duties. The decision is unexpected, but fully in keeping with the law.⁸

The feast that follows sets all things right, and changes the court as legal entity into the court as gathering after reconciliation. The point is reflected in one of the Triads. 'Trí búada aireachta : brithem cen fúasnad, etirchert cen écnach, coma cen diupairt' ; 'Three glories of a gathering : a judge without perturbation, a decision without reviling, terms (agreed upon) without fraud.'⁹ The justice of the decisions and the reigns of *árd-rí* and *ríghfhéinidh* are reflected further by Oisín's final lament where he compares the corruption and lack of later times with an age of plenty in the time of Cormac and Fionn. In the time of Fionn and Cormac, the land was fruitful, 'ba hé bleagan gach bó abhus lán a sreabhainn ré a tomhus' (q. 53c,d).

⁶ *FFÉ* III, p. 88, ll. 1387-96.

⁷ Whitley Stokes, ed., 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword,' *Irische Texte* III : 1 (Leipzig : S. Hirzel, 1891), Gaelic, pp. 200-2 & English, pp. 219-20, §§ 65-78.

⁸ Kelly, op. cit., p. 180 ; part the law for damage by grazing animals is printed in the law of distress from the *Senchus Mór* by Commission for the Ancient Laws of Ireland, *Ancient Laws of Ireland* (London : H.M. Stationery Office, 1865-72), vol. II, pp. 74-.

⁹ Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland* (Dublin : Hodges & Figgis, 1906), pp. 22-3, § 175.

This implies their natural justice, for the land would not be fruitful if they did not uphold right.¹⁰

Conclusion

This lay as a learned piece is confined to the legal realm. The two cases both reflect legal practice and also other famous judgements. The form of the lay is clearly analogous to the other relic lays, but the sword is not convincing as an historical object, unless some quatrains be missing from the short historical section at the beginning. The sword certainly symbolises the power of the *fiana*, but an opportunity for making that reflection much stronger has been missed by choosing to concentrate on Caoilte rather than Tréanmhór, Cumhall, and Fionn. The sword rusts away in the ground before its remains are found ; likewise the power of the *fiana* rusts away down to the aged Oisín, who is himself as time-ravaged as the sword.

¹⁰ Kelly, op. cit., pp. 197-8.

XI : *Bratacha na Féine* and Other Texts

The preceding chapters since chapter VI have discussed the relic lays of Duanaire Finn and the closely affiliated second recension of the text of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti.' Learned predecessors and parallels of these texts outwith the Fenian cycle have also been treated in the search for roots of the genre of the relic lay. The relic lay as a form did not remain productive for long. The lays analysed hitherto, on linguistic grounds, almost certainly precede the middle of the thirteenth century. Apart from the independent preservation of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' there are no other witnesses to the relic lays in Duanaire Finn. In chapter V it was argued that the *Bratacha na Féine* represent the natural conclusion of the literary form adopted by the relic lay. The relics, being brought into the colloquy but destroyed at the conclusion of the lays, have been reduced to symbols for the lay's audience ; further development to the explicit reduction of the relics to symbols within the text of the lay is a natural progression.

This chapter will give some further scrutiny to the tradition of the *Bratacha*. Among the later tradition, the banners, although a widespread tradition, are an isolated one. Some short, learned Fenian poems from *Agallamh na Seanórach* will be considered in this chapter before further analysis of the banners. The oldest recension of the *Agallamh* is roughly contemporary to the relic lays that have been edited in this study¹ ; it is therefore not likely to be the direct source of the relic lays. The parallels between the relic lays and the oldest *Agallamh* are not great ; furthermore, the 24 P 5 recension of the *Agallamh* contains no new material of the type other than the incorporation of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' with a prose argument prefaced to it. Two lore poems in the *Agallamh* are nevertheless worthy of mention as learned items with similarities to the tradition of the banners. There are surprisingly few other Fenian tales or poems that have a structure similar to the relic lays ; these few, the lays about the Bird-Crib and the chastity-testing Mantle in Duanaire Finn, will then be analysed in an attempt to seek related phenomena in later lays and prose tales that cannot be classified as relic lays — the *Nachleben* of the form.

(a) *Agallamh na Seanórach*

The *Agallamh* contains many items of lore, apart from its characteristic *dinnsheanchus*. Some of these do represent objects, but they are not represented as symbols, but rather

¹ Cf. ch. II (c) *supra*.

introductions for learned lore of other types. Two of the poems in the *Agallamh* exhibit strong similarities to the presentation of the Fenian banners ; these are the poems listing the names of the drinking-horns of the *féinidhe* and to whom they belonged and another giving the names the warriors' horses.² The former of these is of thirty-one couplets, approximately sixteen quatrains with one couplet missing. The horns and their owners are listed with such short epithets as will fit in the couplet or quatrain. The size or richness of the horns is told ; often the names such as 'Brec-derg'³ are descriptive, at other times the name and the reality of the object make a contrast, e.g. Diarmaid's 'Adharcán,' 'Little-Horn,' which served forty-eight women.⁴ The poem has no opening or closing frame – that is provided by the prose – but the poem is rather just the lore. The poem on the horses,⁵ which has been mentioned above in chapter VIII, is mostly in the form of 'do bhí [each] ag [féinidh]' with an occasional additional remark.

These learned poems are clearly of the same origins as the tradition of the relic lays. They are learned poems which exist comfortably alongside the relic lays : there are clear parallels in the segments in 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' that enumerate the Fenian hounds or even the boars that Bran killed, which employ the same types of formulæ as these poems in the presentation of learned lists that preserve names in verse.⁶ The *Agallamh* has many other such lists of warriors or people in prose and in verse, but no others regard significant objects⁷ ; early parallels to these have been discussed in chapter II (b) as the most common early manifestations of *fianaigheacht*.

(b) *Bratacha na Féine*

Bratacha na Féine are not, as they survive, a particular lay, or even a text ; rather,

² Whitley Stokes, 'Acallamh na Senórach,' *Irische Texte* IV : 1 (Leipzig : S. Herzel, 1900), pp. 5, 8-9.

³ Ibid. p. 5., l. 157.

⁴ Ibid., ll. 135-6.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁶ Hounds, A qq. 26-30, P qq. 30-34 ; boars, A qq. 36-44, P qq. 42-7.

⁷ There are a also number of treasures uncovered, but these are piles of gold, which allow for the introduction of a tale of how it got there and often provide Patrick with the chance to loose some poor soul from hell. The gold is snatched away by the onlookers and receives no more discussion ; it symbolises nothing, e.g. the grave of Sálbhuidi, in Stokes, op. cit., p. 31.

they are a group of texts, or sometimes an element within longer works. The closeness of the description suggests that the variations, with one exception, are derived from a common original. The texts survive in a number of places : as the central portion of lay XVI in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, which is in a frame summarising a fantastic battle ; as a short, independent lay in M`Callum's collection, and as a section frequently added into the common invader ballad of Maghnus (and occasionally other lays also). The odd item is Duanaire Finn lay XLVI, qq. 65-76.

The oldest text about the banners is that in the Book of the Dean ; Prof. Meek's edition of it is comprehensive in text, commentary, and discussion, although he has since refined it for his forthcoming edition of the MS.⁸ For this reason, the treatment of this lay will be confined to a discussion of the manner in which it relates to the tradition of the relic lays. The lay, as it appears in the Dean's Book, is probably a composite. Meek believes that the banner quatrains are older than the main body of lay XVI wherein they are found :

Another possible exception to the general dating of the BDL corpus as probably fifteenth century in origin is BDL XVI, with its Banner Quatrains. One senses that this poem may be a fusion of several thematic and linguistic layers which may be considerably older than the fifteenth century. This is suggested by the opaque nature of the poem as a whole, an opaqueness perhaps indicative of a long period of reshaping and reinterpretation.⁹

The age of the poem will be considered further once the actual banners have been described. Because of the Book of the Dean's unorthodox orthography and dialectal rewriting, it is not possible to provide a strong argument for a date for the poem on linguistic grounds alone.

The lay is summarised as follows : The frame story is undeveloped ; the first section, qq. 1-8, outlines a quest by nine Fenians for some object related to hounds, possibly a timber for a dog-house. Each quatrain from the second to the eighth lists a place visited.¹⁰ Meek observes that the places named here and in q. 30 'are in the southern half of Ireland, and they suggest a southern Irish origin for this part [the frame] of the poem.'¹¹ A group of dog-heads, cat-heads, and other enemies appears, which gives battle to the group of warriors.¹² The frame

⁸ Donald Meek, 'The Banners of the Fian in Gaelic Ballad Tradition,' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* XI (Summer 1986), pp. 29-69 ; *Gaelic Ballads in the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, Forthcoming.

⁹ Meek, *Gaelic Ballads*, Introduction, § 7.2.

¹⁰ Meek, 'Banners,' pp. 54-6.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 31.

¹² Ibid, p. 56.

then gives way to the intricate description of the banners, qq. 19-27. When the frame returns, the battle itself takes two quatrains, one in which the *fian* encircles Fionn for his protection, and a second which merely states the defeat of the enemy. Two final quatrains suffice to tell that the *fian*'s quest is successful, without stating the manner of its fulfilment.

Before treating the subject of the banners, it is worth noting that the frame is focused on an object. The text is obscure ; Meek tentatively reconstructs *cheinni cholin* in q. 1b and c as *chinn cho[n]lainn*, 'the roof of a dogs' kennel.' The word *cholin*, i.e. *conlann*, appears also as the final words of line d of qq. 2-8, 30.¹³ The lay's frame is thus centred round an object, which may be special or magical considering the difficulty of obtaining the materials for it, and approaches the relic lays in *Duanaire Finn* in its structure. The differences, however, are also important. A dog-house, if that is what the object was in fact intended to be, is not symbolic of the *fian* or any of its heroes. It does not have a use apart from its function, and does not lend itself to allegorical meanings. On the contrary, the many poems and quatrains describing the many Fenian hounds suggest that a very large and special kennel would not be unexpected. The second difference is that there is no survival. The lay does not tell where the structure was, or what happened to it. There is no aged Oisín (or Oisean in this Scottish source) lamenting over the ruins of Fionn's kennels. There is no decision by Patrick to roof an oratory with the remnants of the structure. The frame preserves the form of the relic lay, but the content is stripped of the levels of meaning that drive the relic lays ; similarly, 'The Bird-Crib' described below also falls into this category. Nevertheless, it is not the frame of the banners, interesting as it is in its surface similarities to the relic lays, which places this lay among the subjects of this study ; rather, it is the banners themselves, which do possess the symbolism that the doghouse lacks.

The banners are as follows, in the order that they appear in qq. 19-26, one banner per quatrain, except for q. 23, which describes those of both Caoilte and Oisín : Fionn's is the *Dealbh Ghréine*, or 'Image of Sun.' Goll's banner, the *Fulang Doghra*, 'Prop of Lamentation,' is identified by Meek as a Cross emblem, supported by the description of it as *crossach*. in q. 20d.¹⁴ Raighne's banner is the *Aoincheannach Óir*, or 'Single-Headed Golden One.' Meek has informed the author that in his new, unpublished edition of the poem, he has changed his views regarding this banner. The view in his published edition was that the form

¹³ Ibid., pp. 54-5, 62.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 39.

was likely corrupted from *Éncheandach*, 'Bird-Headed'.¹⁵ He now believes that this banner is the *Onchoinn Óir*, 'Golden Enfield'.¹⁶ The *Coinneal Chatha*, 'Torch of Battle,' is the standard of Faolán. Oisín's banner may be *Dún Naomhtha*, the 'Holy Citadel,' but the text is uncertain.¹⁷ [Caoilte] mac Rónáin's banner bears the *Lámh Dhearg*, the Red Hand. The banner of Oscar [mac Finn] depicts a *Sguab Ghábhaidh*, 'Terrible Sheaf.' There are textual difficulties with Diarmaid's standard, which could be *Lóch Luinneach*, 'Lively-Light,' and also with that of Oscar mac Garaidh, *Bearna a[n] Réabgain*, 'Notch of Ripping'.¹⁸ The standard of Mac Lughach is *Craobh F[h]uileach*, the 'Bloody Tree.'

Prof. Meek argues that the banner names learnedly reflect symbols present on real arms and that the banners are neither ancient associations of symbols with particular *féinidh*, nor random symbols. The tradition of battle flags and standards is an old one, and Meek has outlined the use of banners by the Anglo-Saxon, Viking, and Norman cultures wherewith the Irish had significant interaction. Mediæval Irish use of banners, according to Meek, is attested in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and in the *Bóroma*. Descriptions of banners in bardic verse suggest that 'the insignia of banners can be used to identify particular leaders and families,' which is a sign that Norman concepts of heraldry were filtering into the Gaelic culture.¹⁹ In addition, the devices on the banners are common ones in Norman heraldry. Further evidence pointing to the Norman influence on the tradition of the Fenian banners is the Norman practice of not unfurling the banner until the leader was present on the battlefield and ready to fight ; the use of the banners in the poem reflects this custom.²⁰ Since the banner quatrains clearly

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 67, n. 81.

¹⁶ Meek's view is based on the findings of N.J.A. Williams, 'Of Beasts and Banners,' *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* CXIX (1989), p. 68. *Onchoinn* or *Onchon* are later Scottish forms of *onchú* created from the normalisation of the old dative or accusative. As it is a rare word, it is unsurprising that it is reinterpreted in later oral versions of the lay. The enfield is a common and ancient device in Irish arms, and such a beast is also known within the Scottish context.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 67-7, n. 89. The range of possibilities is wide indeed : 'Dún Naomhtha ("Sacred Citadel")', Dún Neimhidh ("Citadel of [the] Sacred Place"), Dún Aobhdha ("Joyful Citadel"), Donn Neimhe ("Brown One of Venom"), or Dubh Neimhe ("Black One of Venom"). Meek provides strong circumstantial evidence for the form of the 'Holy Citadel' based on both later Scottish tradition and the common usage of the motif in Norman arms.

¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 68-9, n. 97 and 101.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

bear signs of Norman influence, the recent work of N.J.A. Williams on the origin of the heraldic device of the enfield in Norman Irish use has shed some light onto the rate of adoption of Norman heraldry by the Gaelic families :

Armorial bearings did not arrive in Ireland until the Norman conquest... The emergence of the crest over the helmet as a separate item in the heraldic achievement was later still. The earliest crests in the modern sense date from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The Gaelic nobility were in any event slow to adopt heraldry. Only a handful of Gaelic chieftains would have had armorial bearings and crests before the fourteenth century at the very earliest. Most in fact did not adopt or receive coats of arms until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²¹

It is not certain from the lay in the Dean's Book that the banners are crests, but *Duanaire Finn* lay LXVI, discussed below, explicitly states that each is in fact over the helmet of the warrior, and a crest is clearly intended. The quatrains cannot therefore precede the introduction of heraldry, but that does not preclude the incorporation of older symbols into the heraldic arms represented in them. Williams does allow for the possibility of tribal or family symbols predating the introduction of formal heraldry, which were often incorporated into the chief's arms at a later date, such as the use of the Red Hand by the O'Neills or the Cat of the O'Kanes.²² The banners in the lay thus may have earlier origins in symbolic associations now lost. It is thus possible to suggest that the banners quatrains are not earlier than the fourteenth century, although the southern, likely Munster associations of the poem's location, suggest a potentially early position on Williams' timescale not only because Munster received a large and early influx of Normans who quickly became *Hiberniores Hibernicis ipsis* in the famous phrase of Giraldus Cambrensis, but also because the poem is found in Scotland in a form suggesting sufficient time to assimilate to a Scottish linguistic context by the time of the writing of the Book of the Dean of Lismore in the early sixteenth century.

Nevertheless, it is also significant that the context of the Fenian banners is, in every case but one, that of invader ballads associated with the Lochlannaigh, i.e. Vikings, who may be part of the origin of the banners.²³ It is also a significant point that banners not only represent people in Irish tradition, but also *reliquiæ Sanctorum*, which may be in the possession of one of the leaders, or even present on the field of battle ; Meek cites the banners representing the relics of Patrick in *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca* as an example of such a

²¹ Ibid., p. 64.

²² Ibid.

²³ Meek, 'Banners,' p. 39.

banner possibly as early as the eleventh century.²⁴

Prof. Meek has found that many Norman Irish families have arms bearing the devices which are attributed to the Fenians in the banners quatrains. Of the banners that are not textually uncertain, all of them have parallels in real coats of arms.²⁵ The banner of Fionn, the *Dealbh Gréine*, is a sign of absolute power and authority in heraldic tradition ; additionally, it may reflect the name Fionn as meaning 'bright'.²⁶ Other signs are not surprising. The 'Holy Citadel' and possibly the 'Bloody Tree' are signs of strength. The Goll's 'Prop of Lamentation' and also potentially Mac Lughach's 'Bloody Tree' are the Cross, the most common of heraldic devices. Oisín's banner of the 'Holy Citadel' could be the Crusaders' image of Jerusalem, suggesting his later conversion. The Red Hand, symbol of Ulster, is unsurprising. The banner of the 'Terrible Sheaf' belonging to Oscar, while certainly explicable as a common heraldic device, may have an association with 'The Battle of the Sheaves,' wherein Oscar defended the *fian*, who were caught off guard helping with a harvest, until Caoilte could fetch their weapons.²⁷ Nevertheless, there is an element of randomness to these banners, which do not all, as Meek has concluded, 'represent kindred affiliations, status, or qualities' of the particular warriors to whom the devices are assigned.²⁸

Prof. Meek prints a table of a number of later Scottish versions of the banner quatrains which are found in invader ballads such as 'Laoidh Mhànuis' and 'Teanntacht Mór na Féinne'.²⁹ The later descriptions are clearly of the same tradition as the ones in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. Fionn's banner is the changes slightly from the *Dealbh Ghréine* to the *Deò Ghréine*. Oisín's *Dún Naomhtha*, if that is the intended reading in the Book of the Dean, becomes *Dubh-Nimhe*, the 'Black-Venomous.' The banners of Faolán, Oscar mac Garaidh, and Mac Lughach disappear from the later tradition. The *Aon-Cheannach* of Raighne is sometimes attributed to Caoilte in place of the *Lámh Dhearg*. Despite all these changes, the banners of Fionn, Goll, Raighne (most of the time), Oisín (despite a reïnterpretation), Caoilte

²⁴ Ibid., p. 36, n. 31.

²⁵ Cf. the exempla *ibid.*, fig. 1-4, p. 37 ; and text p. 38.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁷ Vid. *DF* I, lay XXI.

²⁸ Meek, 'Banners' pp. 38-9.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 42-3, further explanation pp. 45-6.

(in Kennedy's 'Mànus'), Oscar [mac Finn], and Diarmaid are consistent in the Scottish tradition.

It is not necessary to pursue these later texts individually. The context is of an invader ballad, and the banners are roughly the same regardless of the lay wherein they are inserted. The banners are unfurled, and the Fenians rush to a quick victory ; the battle is hardly described. There is only one Scottish text which does not fit the pattern exactly, for the banners quatrains are expanded into a lay in themselves. This is the lay 'Brataichean na Féinne,' or 'The Banners of the Fingalians' in the M`Callum collection.³⁰ This version has clearly undergone significant reshaping ; it was collected orally, and bears the signs of wear associated with such transmission. It is no longer even in quatrains due to the loss of couplets and lines in several places, and some of the banners are different. There is an additional need for caution because the M`Callums were ardent supporters of the total authenticity of Macpherson's Ossian, as they openly argue throughout their introduction, and their own collection often suggests that the texts have been modified to agree with Macpherson. None the less, the text of the banners in the M`Callums' collection is worthy of note for comparison.

Their version of the lay has an opening eight lines sketching the usual type of vague conflict with the Lochlannaigh ; it also has a closing speech by Fionn and a slightly longer description of the battle that make a total of thirty-five lines, somewhat longer than the concluding frame in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. The lay as a whole is concerned with the banners, not the battle, and the substantial middle section is devoted to their description. The banners are as follows, in the order that they appear : Diarmaid, as usual, has the *Liath-Luinneach*. Raighne, here called Raoine, has the *Aon-Chasach* 'Single-footed' in place of the *Aoin-Cheannach* in the Book of the Dean ; this development is paralleled in other later versions.³¹ Goll's banner is now the *Breachaill bhrochaill*, which is left untranslated in the English edition with the adjective 'spotted' added to it, indicating that it had become partially unintelligible to the M`Callums. This is exactly what Goll's banner is in all of the later versions ; the Book of the Dean is the exception.³² The *Dubh-Nimhe* is now the banner of Caoilte, not Oisín. Oscar's *Sguab-ghabhaidh* is unchanged. Fionn's banner, the *Deo-*

³⁰ Hugh and John M`Callum, *An Original Collection of the Poems of Ossian, Orrann, Ulin, and other Bards, who Flourished in the Same Age*, 2 Vols. (English & Gaelic, with identical English title pages) (Montrose : James Watt, 1816), English, pp. 122-5, Gaelic, pp. 119-123.

³¹ Meek, 'Banners,' p. 42.

³² Ibid.

Ghreine, comes last, and is merely a common variant of the earlier name. The banners here are typical of the later tradition ; if there is anything significant, other than oral reinterpretation of some names, it is the length of the section. The banners are described in forty-eight lines, which would be twelve quatrains. Only six banners are described ; the amount of secondary material has doubled from the one banner-one quatrain use in earlier versions.

If one looks at the additional material, it describes attributes of the warriors and expands the dialogue format of many lays. The banner of Caoilte will suffice as and a typical example :

Co i a'bhratach-sa, Fhili-dhuanaich?
'N i sud bratach mhic treun-bhuadhaich?
Chi mi laoch gasda air a ceann,
'S i fein a' togradh thar sluaghaibh.
Cha 'n i sud ach an Dubh-nimhe,
Bratach Chaoilte mhic Re-tha :
Air a mheud 's do 'm biodh sa' chath,
Cha bhiodh iomradh ach air 'n Dubh-nimhe.³³

The description above tells little about the Fenians or their banners which cannot be found in the Book of the Dean, except how important these banners were become in the later tradition. The banners, which were devised to symbolise the warriors who bore them, have attracted to themselves further description of the warrior. The development is natural, organic, and in keeping with the tradition. There is no violent break between the Book of the Dean lay XVI and these later Scottish lays, or the fragmentary portions of the same banner quatrains that find their way into Irish versions of the ballads.³⁴

The only banners sequence in *Duanaire Finn* is found in lay LXVI (incipit 'In [c]umhain leat a Oisín fhéil'). The plot of the lay, a later version of lay II, is long and intricate apart from the banners — and well worthy of description. The lay begins with a drunken quarrel between Cormac and Fionn arising from discussion of the battle of Cnucha.

Fionn asks Garadh a detail about his father's death, and Garadh uses the opportunity to rile

³³ M'Callum, op. cit., Gaelic ed., p. 121. The English given for the passage, p. 124, is a work which out-Macphersons Macpherson : 'What is this banner, bard of the melodious song? Is this the banner of a victorious son of war? I see a valiant hero at its head, and itself waving over the people. This is the black sharp banner of Caoilte, the son of Retha ; let the host in battle be ever so numerous, the black sharp banner of destruction was the most famous.'

³⁴ E.g. An Seabhac (pseud. of Pádraig Ó Sióchfhradha), *Laoithe na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath : Clólucht an Talbóidigh, 1941), p. 158 ; and Charlotte Brooke, *Reliques of Antient Irish Poetry* (Dublin : George Bonham, 1789), p. 275 ; where the banners of Fionn and Goll appear with the same descriptions as in the Scottish texts. A discussion of further fragments of the Irish tradition of the banners can be found in Reidar Th. Christansen, *The Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (Oslo : Kommosjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1931), pp. 122-3 and also the following discussion of the lay of Maghnus, especially pp. 137, 151-2.

Fionn more yet. Challenges fly back and forth among the warriors, and King Cormac demands that Fionn pass beneath the spit, a grave insult.³⁵ Oisín averts disaster *pro tempore* by silencing the hall with the music of Ciothruaidh.³⁶ Nevertheless, the Fenians depart in the morning desiring to avenge the insults, and they seek Aonghus's assistance. Sixteen of them return to Tara and begin to drink in the royal hall, where Cormac arrests Fionn. The men draw knives and kill the king's men and thereafter take his kine.³⁷ Cormac and Cairbre then pursue them, but Aonghus comes to the aid of the Fenians, magically bearing the herds away.³⁸ It is at this point that sixteen satin 'emblems' are unfurled : 'Do cuirsíom sé súatheantais dheg.'³⁹ All the other descriptions of the banners are a group with banners that match, but this poem does not use their image, it even finds a different word for the banners ; the other poems use *bratach*, -a (Scottish pl. *brataichean*). Williams states that in Irish and other insular usage there appear to have been crests that were models rather than banners early in the process of adoption of crests ; Iollann's spears and Fearghus' wand, among others appear to be crests of this type.⁴⁰ The ones which are banners are expressly stated to be such. Nevertheless, the manner that these emblems are used in the text is similar to the other lays.

The emblems are as follows : Fionn's crest is plain white silk (q. 65). Oscar's (q. 66) bears the image of a rowan heavy with fruit. Diarmaid's banner (q. 67) depicts a yew tree. Goll (q. 68) had a piper as his. Faolán mac Finn's flag is mentioned (q. 69a,b), but not its appearance ; it merely is a satin helmet crest *go ccrann ndíoghainn*. Iollann bears nine green spears (q. 69c,d). Fear Logha has two hounds ; Mac Lughach a deer (q. 70). Cairioll has a red tree, and Oisín himself possesses a nautical crest of *crann loinge 's a sheól a ccrois*. Aodh Beag mac Finn's helmet bore a 'fiery top' (q. 72). The next quatrain, describing Raighne mac Finn's banner gives only the information that it was twenty-four cubits of fine satin. Caoilte's

³⁵ *DF* II, pp. 336-345, qq. 1-30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 344-7, qq. 30-38.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-51, qq. 39-55.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 350-55, qq. 56-63.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 354, q. 64a.

⁴⁰ Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

banner is of plain red silk (q. 74). Colla's emblem is two golden cranes (q. 74).⁴¹ Fearghus file mac Finn's helmet bears the device of his office, a golden poet's wand (q. 75).

Feardamhain's odd crest *do chasnaoí ghléghil shoilléir* (q. 76) was interpreted as 'bright shining woodshavings (?)' by Murphy ; it remains obscure and problematic. In the earlier list of the sixteen warriors (qq. 45-50), which otherwise matches the emblems, Daolghus is listed as among the warriors (q. 47d), but no banner or crest for him is described.⁴² There are said to be sixteen emblems (q. 64a), but only fifteen are in the text as it is preserved.⁴³ It must be assumed that a quatrain is missing from the text of the lay.

The moment that the emblems have been described, it is declared that the Fenians have won the battle ; they capture Cormac and wound Cairbre. A hundred heads are placed upon pikes. Cormac himself is forced to pass beneath the spit in defeat, but Fionn, in a magnanimous gesture follows him in doing so ; peace is restored.⁴⁴ The frame of Oisín's narration to S. Patrick concludes the lay.

This lay is identical in plot and similar in text to Duanaire Finn lay II. Prof. Murphy considered the version of lay LXVI to be inferior and corrupt. He has listed the quatrains in this latter lay that are not in lay II ; these 'interpolations' include qq. 64-76 — the entire banners section.⁴⁵ The inclusion of the banners motif is the most important difference, but Murphy also concludes that there was some learned hand at work in the rewriting of the lay because forms forbidden in Classical verse have been corrected. On the other hand, he notes that the metre is frequently corrupted. Whether what survives is a partial restoration of a text that had changed from the original, an incompetent redaction, or a variant recension which arrived in the hands of Ó Dochartaigh in a corrupted copy (or potentially orally?), is unclear. The lack of a banner when the total number is listed is an indication of textual evolution after the recension assumed its form. One may suspect that there may have been better texts of the

⁴¹ Murphy (*DF* II, p. 367) translates 'herons,' but the original (q. 74d) has *dá chuirr*, plural of *corr*, the same word used for 'crane' in lay VI. There is no distinction between the birds in Gaelic, nor any contextual reason for the different translation here, vid. Anne Ross 'Esus et les Trois «Grues.»' *Études Celtiques* IX (1960), p. 423 for the range of birds designated by *corr*, which include cranes, herons, egrets, and most any other long-legged waterfowl. The mediæval Gaelic language did not then have separate terms for all these species, many of which are natives of warmer climes.

⁴² *DF* II, p. 348.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-9, qq., 77-81.

⁴⁵ *DF* III, p. 161.

recension : Murphy believes that this version of the poem must have been better known at one time ; he recalls that a 'Lay of the Sixteen Chiefs, or the Cattle Prey of Tara' is mentioned, but not printed, in the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*.⁴⁶ Murphy's views regarding the origin of the recension are unclear from his notes. The date assigned to the lay II version by Murphy is the 'second half of the twelfth century,' but he then equivocates and says that the early thirteenth is possible.⁴⁷ He says nothing at all about the age of the second redaction. The points raised above on the banners quatrains associated with the lay in the Book of the Dean of Lismore shew that the recension of Duanaire Finn LXVI must be later than lay II because the banners quatrains in lay LXVI clearly describe helmet crests, which were not adopted in Irish usage until far later than Murphy's date for lay II. There is a hint that the banners are not earlier than the fifteenth century in this lay. Diarmaid's yew-tree banner is almost certainly a reference to a famous episode described in Duanaire Finn lay LXIX ; in older sources such as *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne*, the story is the same, but the tree is a rowan.⁴⁸ Diarmaid hides in a yew tree under which Fionn and Oisín then play chess ; he indicates moves to Oisín by dropping berries, and is thus discovered. (The *Tóraigheacht* version, where Oscar then defends Diarmaid against Fionn, could possibly give rise to Oscar's rowan-tree banner, but rowans are too common in tradition of the lays [especially in regard to Oisín, who has a taste for rowan berries]⁴⁹ to be certain that a banner is taken from both of the variations of the tale.) Murphy dated lay LXIX as no earlier than the fifteenth century ; if the lay is indeed the first place in which the tree is a yew, then the banner quatrains cannot be earlier.

The other banners described in this lay do not appear to be learned, but rather an imitation of the learned motifs in other lays. Three of the banners are plain ; Fionn and Faolán have simple silken banners, and Caoilte's is plain red. The wand of Fearghus file is merely the simple symbol of his office depicted. The fiery crest of Aodh beag mac Finn is unsurprising, as that is the literal meaning of his name. Not a single one of the banners matches the other tradition's banners, and only one clearly symbolises a known Fenian tale or poem, that of

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 161-2, cf. *Transactions of the Ossianic Society* I, p. 40 ; V, pp. 160 & 207.

⁴⁷ *DF* III, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*, *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, Vol . III, p. 142-3 ; Nessa Ní Sheaghdha, *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1968), pp. 70-5.

⁴⁹ Cf. *DF* I, lay III, q. 45 ; and lay XXXI, which is entirely concerned with the aged Oisín's attempt to obtain rowan berries.

Diarmaid, described in the preceding paragraph.

There are some general associations which unsurprisingly could inspire banners. Colla's cranes are interesting because of the associations of the crane with war and strife, as has been discussed above in chapter VI at length, but there is no clear sign that there is a more specific link. Likewise, Fear Logha's hounds and Mac Lughach's deer are an obvious symbol of the general association of the *fiana* with the hunt. Oscar's rowan and Cairioll's tree are not surprising. Nor are the spears of Iollann, although there is no obvious reason why they should be green. The only items that are not immediately explicable are Goll's piper and Oisín's mast and sail. Feardhamhain's crest is in all likelihood a later phrasing substituted into the text ; the idea of a crest of wood-shavings is bizarre, even nonsensical.

The crests of Duanaire Finn lay LXVI thus appear to be a late imitation of the elder, learned material that depicts plausible crests. Suspicion that the banner quatrains in this lay were added on the model of the tradition of the the other banner quatrains is certainly not without justification. If that be not the case, then it would be almost certainly an indicator that the second set of banners points towards a wider tradition of construction of such quatrains that is no longer extant.

From both sets, a pattern can be found. The frames are not important, except that they present foreign and magical opponents of the *fian*. Once they have prepared for battle, the standards are unfurled. The Fenians then rout their enemies ; it is implied that there may be magical help from their emblems, which symbolise the power of the warriors ; this symbolism is parallel to the carrying of banners depicting relics, which indicated that their power was fighting alongside the men who bore their standards. The banners over time came to be associated with short descriptions of the warriors, and the links became stronger. Although the banners do not endure physically as a part of the frame story, a banner or a crest is reconstructable from its description because it is a symbolic and basic image. The use of the banner quatrains passes the knowledge of the symbolism of the banners for the warriors to the audience ; physical presence of the actual standard is not required because it can be recreated in mind or matter with ease.

(c) The Bird Crib

'The Bird-Crib,' Duanaire Finn lay XLI (incipit 'Cliabhán cuill cá do-róine'),⁵⁰ comes

⁵⁰ *DF* II, pp. 60-65.

closest among the later tradition of Fenian lays to the form of a relic lay. Prof. Murphy's commentary dated the poem to the fifteenth century ; its language is free of the Middle Gaelic forms often seen in the relic lays. Murphy also observed that the last two quatrains are a later addition. Quatrain 18d has a *dúnadh* and is then followed by two quatrains of *rannaigheacht*, although the rest of the poem is in *deibhidhe*.⁵¹

The poem begins with a question by S. Patrick to one of the ancients, Caoilte or Oisín ; the original poem does not name the speaker, but the later q. 19 identifies him as Caoilte. Patrick asks who was the first to make a bird-crib. Fionn and sixty of his warriors were once on Sliabh Luachra, when they were overtaken by a mist and descended onto a strange plain, probably otherworldly. There was a warrior there, catching birds with a golden crib. He invites the company to a feast, and they follow him into his stronghold. The warrior locks them within by a door of iron bars. They are imprisoned for a week. Fionn, in hunger, made a hazel imitation of the warrior's bird-crib and the men subsist on their catch. The warrior, now identified as the son of Troghan, returns to take the heads of the Fenians, expecting to find them to have perished by hunger. They are well ; the warrior is ambushed but spared by the mercy of Fionn, who takes him home safely. The tale is summarised in q. 18, the original ending, as the greatest deed of mercy done by Fionn.

Although the story contains only a little lore, it does attempt to follow the model of the learned lays rather than the simpler popular tradition. The dialogue frame of the opening question and closing answer are like those in the relic lays ; no further discussion with Patrick intrudes on the action as it does in so many later lays. The closing stressing of the pardon as the greatest clemency of Fionn also implies a learned list or triad of merciful deeds or of acts of Fionn that were extreme in some way (such as bravest, most shameful, noblest, etc.). Even if no such list existed – which it may or may not have – the author of the lay is clearly imitating the earlier learned lays wherein such lists were common. Yet there is a significant way that this lay does not match with the relic lays considered in this study : it lacks an enduring object. The bird-crib is copied from an apparently otherworldly figure and used in the lay. There is no mention of the preservation of either the golden bird-crib or of Fionn's hazel one. The question regarding the inventor of the crib, however, does make clear that the information has been disseminated by the Fenians ; Patrick must already have knowledge of the item in order to ask about its origins. Such curiosity makes the lay learned, but it does not create a relic.

Furthermore, the Fenian relics are symbolic of the warriors to whom they belonged, or even of

⁵¹ *DF* III, p. 95.

the institution of *fianaigheacht* as a whole. 'The Bird-Crib' fails to have such symbolism. The lay of the bird-crib is clearly in the same tradition as the relic-lays. The similarities of structure and content suggest that it was written by one who had a familiarity with the earlier and more learned Fenian tradition, and who modeled his composition with items such as the relic lays as models. 'The Bird-Crib' is thus the best example of the *Nachleben* of the relic lay to survive in the later tradition.

(d) *Laoidh an Bhruit*

Duanaire Finn lay LXV, 'Laoidh an Bhruit' as it is usually entitled, *anglice* 'The Ballad of the Mantle' (although Murphy called it 'The Magic Cloak'),⁵² is a problematic text. It exists in a number of versions, all of which share the same general structure. The text of the ballad is in Duanaire Finn, where it is well-preserved linguistically, but it is also found a century earlier in the Book of the Dean of Lismore.⁵³ The Book of the Dean's version contains two more quatrains ; one is between qq. 2 and 3 in Duanaire Finn and names the wives, the other between qq. 5 and 6, which merely seats the stranger next to Fionn. The other variations in the text are minor. The version in Edinburgh Advocates' MS 54 p. 60 contains all the quatrains of the Dean of Lismore's version in correct orthography ; it is perhaps the best text of the lay.⁵⁴ Murphy lists a number of later versions of the lay, which, from the number of recensions, appears to have enjoyed significant popularity ; a glance through the indices of verse in the MS catalogue of any library under the incipit 'Lá dá ndeacha(idh) Fionn ag ól' or 'Lá dá raibh(e) Fionn ag ól' will locate a not insignificant number of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century copies.⁵⁵ The lay, according to Murphy, is not significantly older than the Book of the Dean's text from a linguistic perspective ; Professor Meek's unpublished introduction to his new edition agrees that the lay does not appear significantly older than the Book of the Dean.

The argument of the lay as found in Duanaire Finn is as follows : Fionn is at home having a bout of drinking with six of his *féinidhe* and their wives. The men begin to boast of

⁵² Lay LXV, *DF* II, pp. 330-5.

⁵³ Neil Ross, *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh : Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1939), lay VII, pp. 30-5.

⁵⁴ Printed diplomatically in Alexander Cameron, *Reliquiæ Celticæ* (Inverness : The Northern Chronicle, 1892-4), vol. I, pp. 116-8.

⁵⁵ *DF* III, pp. 153-4.

the purity of their wives. A strange woman in a marvellous cloak enters. She declares that the cloak will only cover a woman insofar as she is chaste. All the Fenian wives are put to the test ; only Mac Reithe's wife comes close to passing it, but for the mantle's failure to cover the last joint of her little toe, the result of kissing Diarmaid. The woman, having humiliated the company, departs. The lay is vague in the description of all except the action summarised above. No place is named except Fionn's home at Almhain in the first quatrain, and the lay does not contain any learned elements. The lay does not have a definite time within the narrative of the broader cycle, except for the placement of it after the slaying of the Dearg, if that quatrain is original to the lay ; 'Dán an Deirg' itself could fit almost anywhere within the main part of the Fenian cycle. Additionally, the lay does not have contents that have significant repercussions for the development of the cycle.

In the terms by which the relic lays have been defined for this study, this ballad does not fit. The relic lays all contain objects that endure after the Fenians and which symbolise them. The 'Ballad of the Mantle' is only a lay which focuses upon an object ; it does not come to have a greater symbolism. Nevertheless, even this extent of similarity is rare, and it is fitting that the origins of the ballad be explored in order to determine the relationship more precisely. Murphy's notes on the lay focus on contrasting the conflicting views of the origin of the lay.

Prof. L.C. Stern believed that the Arthurian tale, likely of Celtic origin, was borrowed into Gaelic and adapted into the Fenian cycle. The magical chastity-test is an international motif, but the mantle as the object, and especially the uncovered little-toe detail, exist in a number of Arthurian tales. Stern thus concluded that the closeness of correspondence of detail indicated that the ballad, which is probably not significantly earlier than A.D. 1500, was derived from the Arthurian tale. Prof. Cross argued that the lay developed independently of the Arthurian tale, although both shared a native Celtic motif. Cross' argument is based on the unlikely choices of identity or motivation for the woman's appearance in the Arthurian tradition, whilst the Book of the Dean and Advocates' MS 54 have the woman identify herself as the daughter of Dearg, a warrior slain by *fiana Finn* in a well-known lay, number LXIII in *Duanaire Finn*, and whose death is mentioned in all recensions of the *Agallamh*. (This quatrain where the woman names herself in the 'Ballad of the Mantle' [q. 16] is corrupt in *Duanaire Finn*, and the name does not occur there.) Cross thus believed that the Fenian version could

not be a derivative of the Arthurian. Murphy leaves the question moot.⁵⁶ There is little new evidence of significance to answer the question directly, but Prof. Gillies' study of the Arthurian tradition in Gaelic provides evidence that a large portion of Arthurian tales that exist in Gaelic have been adapted into the Fenian cycle.⁵⁷ In the body his article, Prof. Gillies did not commit himself directly to either side of the debate, although he did state that his instinct was that there was an Arthurian borrowing, perhaps refreshed from some other, older root source.⁵⁸ Yet he gives a far stronger view in a lengthy footnote, listing multiple Gaelic items of confirmed Arthurian origins : the sheer number of cases of movement in this direction – and the lack of movement in the other – lends great weight to Stern's argument.⁵⁹ Gillies has informed the author that in the time since the publication of the article, his views in favour of Stern's argument have grown stronger from more examples of such secondary evidence which have been brought to his attention.

The nonconformity of the 'Laoidh an Bhruit' to the relic lays or the broader learned Fenian tradition is not surprising if it is indeed a later adaptation. The lay did not require more knowledge than the ability to name Fionn and six warriors from the *fiana* in order to fit it into the cycle, and the well-considered use of *inghean an Deirg* in the earliest Scottish MS is neither a rare reference nor especially learned, although it is certainly effective. It is certainly proper to take Prof. Gillies's warning that there is likely more than a borrowing at work in this lay, even though the plot is probably borrowed from the Arthurian tale. Nevertheless, this basic borrowing does indicate that a model other than the relic-lay format is operating in this poem as the primary template, even if some influence comes from the formal patterns of earlier Fenian lays. There is no clear continuity between the relic lays and 'Laoidh an Bhruit.'

The relic lays thus had little *Nachleben*. On the most basic level they failed to be copied into later MSS, which is an indicator that they were not widely read. Furthermore, it can be seen that the influence of them was small ; they were not generally seen as a model for later composition. With the passing of time, the Fenian cycle grew less and less learned, and

⁵⁶ *DF* III, pp.155-9 ; cf. the full arguments, Ludwig Stern, 'Die gaelische Ballade vom Mantel,' *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* I (1897), pp. 302-10 ; Tom Peete Cross, 'The Gaelic "Ballad of the Mantle,"' *Modern Philology* 16 (1918-9), pp. 153-62.

⁵⁷ William Gillies, 'Arthur in Gaelic Tradition,' Part I, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* II (Winter 1981), pp. 47-72 ; Part II, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* III (Summer 1982), pp. 40-75.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 66.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 62.

the relic lays thus had only a small period of productivity. The symbol of the banners stood out as a motif that captured imagination, but it was unique, a hybrid between the early learned *fianaigheacht* and a distillation of the symbolism in the relic lays. Furthermore, it had the advantage of being brief and adaptable. The handful of texts considered in this chapter – the full number of those with even a passing resemblance to the relic lays – demonstrates that the relic lays are in fact more isolated within the *fianaigheacht* than they are within the tradition of mediæval learned literature.

XII : Conclusion

Origin of the Relic Lays

It is not an easy matter to say something about the origins of the relic lays, yet it is unquestionably a portion of the remit of this study. None of the texts have any information on their origins in them, nor do they survive in MSS contemporary to their composition. The dates assigned to them must be given on linguistic grounds, as was discussed in chapter IV, with the slight aid of learned references in their contexts. Nevertheless, there are some clues to the origins of the form, which may be extended to the group of lays with due caution because they are a small and closely related group. There are three points that all point in the same general direction : Classical motifs in 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair,' the MSS of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' and the location of the relics of S. Patrick in that lay.

The poem on Oscar's sword contains a series of episodes concerning the Classical pantheon, the life of Hercules, the *Iliad*, and the *Æneid*. These form nearly half of the lay. The mixing of Classical and native material in a Gaelic poem is unusual for the period. Græco-Roman motifs are common in the bardic poems of the Classical Gaelic period, but prior to the Classical period, Classical literature was largely isolated from Gaelic. It served as a learned comparison, or even as a model,¹ but ancient literature and characters were not incorporated into the *scéala* or poetry whereof they were not the subject. The Classical materials are treated cyclically in this lay ; that reflects the approaches that Continental scholars were taking to it in the twelfth century.² The presence of Continental approaches suggests influence of that type of scholarship. The historical channel whereby it came is not obscure ; the twelfth century saw the large-scale arrival of Continental monastic orders in Ireland in the process of ecclesiastical reforms, especially after the synod of Rathbresail, A.D. 1111. The lay of Oscar's sword is clearly learned, implying an educated author with access to such scholarly resources of Latin scholarship as a new monastery would provide. The introduction of new approaches in Continental Latin scholarship along with the usually Norman monks in the new or reformed foundations is not merely a *terminus post quem* for this text, but rather a window. After 1175, the Normanised foundations, even those that preceded the conquest, ceased to take on

¹ E.g. the conception of Mongán, which is based on the birth of Hercules, as demonstrated in Tomas Ó Broin, 'Classical Source of the "Conception of Mongán,"' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XXVIII (1960-1), pp. 262-71.

² Erich Poppe, 'New Introduction to 1995 Edition of *Imtheachta Æniasa : The Irish Æneid*,' *Imtheachta Æniasa : The Irish Æneid*, ed. George Calder (London : Irish Texts Society, 1995), pp. 11-15.

native Irish vocations.³ The Irish built their own reformed monasteries, which would have had far less access to the newly arrived scholarship. Thus arose the situation described in chapter V above, where the number of Classical texts used in bardic poetry became fixed for centuries. The latest of the relic lays is thus not likely to date more than a generation after the cessation of Irish vocations in Norman houses and is thus not likely to postdate the first quarter of the thirteenth century at the latest on grounds of content alone.

The arrival of the new orders began in the east of Ireland, and the greatest number of houses were located in that region. In particular, the concentration of Cistercians in Down, the diocese of S. Malachy, is high ; the lists that are the body of the Rev. Prof. Gwynn's work place a high and an early concentration of reformed houses in that general area.⁴ It is also worthy of note that Armagh adopted Augustinian rule. It is in Armagh that the *Bachall Íosa* was kept, and the relics of S. Patrick were generally associated with Churches of that area of the northeast. It is reasonable to connect a poem that adds additional status to precious objects by enriching their history with the places in which those objects were, perhaps even their possessors. It is also worthy of mention that qq. 54-8 of 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilte' are a complaint about corrupt clergy ; such sentiments are natural if that lay is also the product of a reformed house looking at its neighbours with distaste at their lax practices.

This hypothesis is supported by the MS tradition of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilte.' *Duanaire Finn*, although written on the Continent, can be seen as an Ulster MS. In the General Introduction to part II of this study, the history of that MS is given in detail. Both of the scribes of it bear names of Ulster origin ; the patron of the MS was an Antrim MacDonnell. The texts bear signs of Ulster dialect, which Murphy outlined in what may be the longest footnote in the discipline of Celtic Studies.⁵

The other recension is also not difficult to trace to Ulster origins. P was collected by MacAdam in Ulster ; although its precise origins are unknown, Ní Shéaghdha argues that it is the work of Pádraig Mac Óghannan, a northern scribe ; and, as Hyde had earlier noted, the

³ Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses : Ireland, With an Appendix to early sites* (Dublin : Longman, 1970), p. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁵ *DF* III, p. 126, n. 2, continuing to p. 132.

MS is associated with the scribal tradition of Antrim, Derry, and Down.⁶ Prof. Gillies has suggested that the surname of the scribe is a modernised form of mac Adhomhnáin, which suggests not only Ulster, but monastic connexions.

The origins of the three late MSS are closely related. The scribal colophon in R places its exemplar in Dublin and, by the stemma argued in the introduction to part II, L and M are probably derived from the same MS exemplar. The Dublin MS, which has been called β in the stemma, is to be associated with the place where the Bachall Íosa was after 1178, wherefore one may surmise that the importance of that relic may have been a factor in the continued popularity of the lay in Dublin after the subgenre of the relic lay had passed from general circulation, and that a copy, potentially associated with Christ Church, provided sufficient copies to ensure the survival of the Dublin recension. The Dublin recension is close to P, and shares through β in α , which is likely to be an Armagh-area MS, associated with a monastery where the Bachall Íosa or the Patrician bells were venerated or such a monastery's immediate contacts, e.g. hereditary keepers or patrons. It is the Duanaire Finn text that is isolated, as it is both better linguistically and in its ordering, but deficient insofar as it is missing half a dozen quatrains, and suggests centuries of textual isolation stretching back to the archetype. The MS tradition of the lay thus points consistently towards Armagh or Down, and the possible connexion of the text to the Bachall Íosa is fortified by the Dublin sub-recension.

The two lays that may be traced, however tentatively, both point in the same direction, a monastic origin in the reformed foundations of approximately the twelfth century, specifically in the Normanised monasteries of Co. Down or Armagh. The references to ecclesiastical reform in 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' are also most easily placed in such a context. Because the lays share closely in their literary construction and motifs as well as their inclusion in Duanaire Finn, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the genre of the relic lay, if not confined to such areas of the northeast of Ireland, at least originated there. Such a context, though impossible to prove, is in keeping with all of the relic lay texts from Duanaire Finn in this study. It is wiser to forebear lumping the later and more widespread motif of *bratacha na Féinne* in this origin ; it is clearly a later reflex, probably derived from the earlier and more closely associated group of relic lays.

These suggestions, it is recognised, are certainly speculative, but printing them here may serve as a point onto which more evidence, should it come to light, can be leaned and

⁶ AS I, pp. xxii-xxiii ; Douglas Hyde, 'The Reeves MS of the "Agallamh na Senorach,"' *Révue Celtique* XXXVIII (1921), p. 290. Vid. the General Introduction to part II of this study for full descriptions of this and the following MSS.

thereby give greater substance to the argument. To date, nothing, however tentative, has been written on this subject ; it is certainly a point worthy of all analysis that the slender evidence can provide.

Summary

In the early chapters of this thesis, there was an attempt to place the relic lays within the Fenian cycle based on the antecedent probability that the learned motifs in them made them more similar to *Agallamh na Seanórach* than to later material. Yet it is also clear that the relic lays and the broader learned Fenian tradition are separated from the earliest lyrics. A reäppraisal of Prof. Murphy's dates of the relic lays broadly confirmed his dates for the poems, although it was noted that his dates always erred on the side of lateness.

The relic lays are closely connected in regard to every aspect of them that has been examined. They cover a linguistic range of about a century of observed linguistic evolution, from the early twelfth to the early thirteenth centuries. All are written in the metre of *ógláchas ar deibhidhe*. UnClassical forms are found, and also preClassicisms in both grammar and vocabulary. The language of these poems is not to a standard used for other types of compositions, but rather displays elements of conservatism and progressivism from different registers and periods. Nevertheless, the language of these poems is quite consistent among them as a group ; they have a style, linguistic tendencies to reflect earlier heroic texts, and a vocabulary which can be described as a register of their own, which has evolved for the lays.

Within the Fenian cycle, the relic lays poems are fairly isolated. As poems friendly to the programme of Christianity and lore working together, they have a general sympathy with the ethos of *Agallamh na Seanórach*. That programme is shared only with early, learned poems. There are a considerably large number of short, learned Fenian poems in *Duanaire Finn*, more embedded in *Agallamh na Seanórach*, and elsewhere. Those learned poems are usually not concerned with narrative ; narrative poems, which tend to be later in date, are not generally concerned with learning. A strong distinction is usually to be observed between these two categories, as Prof. Ó hUiginn summarises :

Maidir lena n-ábhar, tig linn dhá phríomhroinn ghinearálta a dhéanamh den cuid is mó. Laoithe seanchais agus laoithe eachtraíochta a thabharfar anseo orthu. Is éard a thuigtear le laoi shenchais, dán a thugann cuntas ar ghné éigin de shaol na Féinne – go háirithe cúrsaí ginealaigh – ach nach bhfuil insint ar aon scéal amháin ann. Is minic mar sin liosta ainmneacha, nithe nó

míoneachtraí i ndán dá leithéid.⁷

Only the relic lays cross this divide ; it is notable that Ó hUiginn places the two sword poems and the shield of Fionn in the former category, but 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' in the latter category.⁸ Considering the dates given to the lays in *Duanaire Finn* by Murphy, it is reasonable to assert that the relic lays are the largest group of Fenian poems with a narrative element prior to A.D. 1250.⁹ It would not be too strong to say that the relic lays are the last truly learned Fenian verse. Furthermore, they are among the first narrative poems of significant length in Gaelic. The relic lays are the pivot point between the learned poem and the lay ; they are, in short, the birth of the genre of the Ossianic ballad as it has endured for almost nine hundred years to the present.

These poems are unique not only in straddling the otherwise rigid distinction between lore and narrative, but also in the reification of the lore. All of the objects in the lays are symbols of the warriors and more generally, the characteristics of the *fiana*. The relics are presented as fragments of an heroic past that is nearly gone. The relics do not survive as such in the world of the audience ; the world whereof they were a part is gone altogether.

In the presentation of learned materials, the ballads draw together a number of themes in addition to the objects. A significant number of these themes are shared between the texts as a group. Many of the texts use Fionntan as a model for the Fenian ancients. Fionntan fulfills the same purpose as Oisín for the compilers of synthetic history, for both long-lived ancients provide an explanation for the transmission of information about the preliterate past to the Christian historians. 'The Colloquy of Fintan and the Hawk of Achill' may have provided the template of discussion between ancients that is seen in the lays and perhaps also *Agallamh na Seanórach*. The lists of lore, anecdotes, and place names is reflected in more than outline form in the relic lays. The salmon of the deep in 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' is either Fionntan or related to him. Oisín remarks to S. Patrick that Fionntan would also be able to tell the story of Fionn's shield to him as well (SF q. 8).

The Irish Ordeals is another text that has multiple resonances in these lays. 'Laoidh Colga Chaoilti' has a series of disputes taken to different judges in the same manner as in the

⁷ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanaire Finn,' *An Fhiannaíocht : Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXV*, ed. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1995), p. 58.

⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

⁹ Cf. the chart in *DF* III, pp. cxvi-cxvii.

Ordeals. The episode of Cormac's cup has a strong affinity to Caoilte's dipper in structure as well as the færy-cup. The passage describing Socht and the sword is also reflected in 'Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair.'

In the presentation of the learning, the poem on Oscar's sword shews a conception of history and the most important highlights of it that is identical with Giolla an Choimdheadh's poem in the Leabhar Laighneach. His poem also contains the oldest reference to the *corr-bholg* and tells how Fionn recovered it from Clann Morna. There is a more general formal correspondence of narration between his work and Fionn's shield in the episodic structure. It is also worthy of note that Manannán appears associated with three of the objects – and also Cormac's cup in the *Ordeals* – which display a knowledge of motifs not preserved in any known tale or poem.¹⁰ There are further echoes of *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, the Classical epics, and bardic poetry in these lays. In summary, the lays are learned lore, that is, they reflect the concerns and interests of the learned élites of the mediæval Gaelic world.

The poems glisten with learned references and unlikely interpretations of the apparently obvious. The tendency in them would give them a fair claim to Poe's title *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. The interpretation of the *corr-bholg* as coming from a crane is a masterly and a learned note when its connexion to the colloquy between Oisín and the crane in 24 P 5 is seen. There is a delight in the list and catalogue in all of these lays. The *dinnshenchas* is often cunning and punning. On an early draft of chapter VIII, Prof. Meek penciled the following remark about the texts as a group, which the author takes the liberty of reproducing :

Sometimes I wonder if there is an intentional element of the grotesque in the 'relic lays,' including the banners. The 'reification' of Fenian adventure seems to give composers the chance to produce the weird and the wonderful, the holy and the unholy, in unusual combinations !

Like the grotesques of Poe, the relic lays are halfway to self-parody, and it is no surprise that the linguistically last of the lays stands as a most learned send-up, just as *Aisling meic Con Glinne* stands to the tradition of the *eachtraí* and *iomramha*. 'The Bird-Crib,' one of the few descendants of the relic lays, stresses the grotesque further yet to the expense of the learned lore. The intensely arabesque exuberance of the lays makes them unique in literature. The

¹⁰ Manannán is the craftsman of CB and SF ; he is also the father-in-law of Eanna in SC. This tendency of Manannán to be associated with the creation and distribution of magical objects is not confined to these lays, the author has found it also in the *Ordeals* and bardic poetry. The discussion is too long a digression for inclusion in this thesis, and it is the hope of the author to pursue the matter presently outwith this study.

sources and learning in the lays, told in rapid progression, and the reminiscences that change alternately between fantasy and nightmare overwhelm the reader ; they dazzle the mind as the carpet-pages of the Book of Kells dazzle the eye.

The relic lays are certainly not the idle musings of an illiterate farmer-poet, nor folktales that have run away with themselves for seven score quatrains of inferior verse. They are the work – even if the light work – of the *aes dána*, sharing in the same learned tradition as *Agallamh na Seanórach*, and represent a crucial pivot in the rise of the Fenian cycle into its literary prominence.

Part II : Texts

I : General Introduction to the Editions

This part of the present study is mainly comprised of the originals of the lays with literal translations into English. A few general remarks are prefaced, concerning the MSS, the general principles on which these editions have been prepared from them, and the principles of the translations which accompany the editions. Brief introductions precede each text, but the general principles are here outlined. The 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilte' is a special case ; two recensions of the text from different MSS outlined below will be presented in separate editions and compared textually following the edition of the second recension.

(a) MS Sources

Killiney MS A 20 : 'Duanaire Finn'

The identification of the MS as Killiney MS A 20, as Murphy and more recent authors have done now, has an added complication, inasmuch as the Franciscan house of studies at Killiney has given its non-theological MSS to the Irish nation. The MSS were placed in the Archives of University College, Dublin in June, A.D. 2001, but have not been recatalogued. In the present work, it is necessary to distinguish between the Mac Neill and Murphy Irish Texts Society edition and the MS itself, wherefore the MS shall be cited hereafter in the editions as A, but the printed edition as *DF*.¹

This MS, known as Duanaire Finn from the time of its writing, ranks among the most famous of Gaelic MSS in name. Just about all scholars of the *Fianaigheacht* have written about it, but usually in the context of comparing it to earlier or later material. Scholarly mentions of this MS are thus frequent, but discussions have been mostly thematic overviews of the MS rather than literary and textual analysis of the specific poems within it. The MS's history is well-documented and is recorded in several published sources. The historical background in which A was compiled has already been related in Part I in the context of seventeenth-century scholarly activity on the continent. This MS is the source of the greatest number of texts upon which this work focuses. What follows here is a physical and palæographical sketch of the MS and an outline of its later history, describing its location and

¹ In part I, the *duanaire* in the MS was also referred to by the same abbreviation as the published edition, but unitalicised.

accessibility from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present.

The MS was compiled for Captain Sorley MacDonnell by Aodh Ó Dochartaigh and Niall Gruamdha Ó Catháin at Ostend and Louvain. Ó Catháin began the *Agallamh* on August 7th, A.D. 1626.² The last date in the MS is August 6th, A.D. 1627.³

The source of the material in A is unknown. One may only conjecture whether it was specially gathered in Ireland, copied from MSS in the libraries of Ostend and Louvain, or copied from books in the possession of other exiles. Prof. Ó hUiginn recently has raised the interesting possibility that there was at least one more MS. Captain MacDonnell's books are A, containing heroic poetry, and the Book of O'Connor Don, containing a bardic miscellany but no poems relating to the MacDonnells. Ó hUiginn suggests that MacDonnell's copying of what sources he had at hand was thematic, and that there was almost certainly a third book of poetry relating to his own family, and potentially other volumes compiled on other themes.⁴ This theory suggests that MacDonnell had access to a large quantity of books, most of which were of wild-geese origin and contained a mixtures of everything bound together. There are certainly multiple MSS used in creating the MS, rather than a single exemplar, as the scribal comments in the margins indicate piecemeal work as more poems became available to them.⁵ The contents of the MS are antiquarian⁶ ; a majority of the poems in A are not found in any other extant MSS and are linguistically older than most of the Ossianic lays attested in other MSS.

The location of A at St. Anthony's College, Louvain, for a century and a half seems natural. A debt of MacDonnell to the college of 150 florins is recorded on April 16th, A.D. 1632. As Somhairle MacDonnell, a well-recorded personage, disappears from the historical record thereafter, it is surmised that he fell in the course of duty. The Rev. Jennings has

² Sect. 1, fol. 1r.

³ Fol. 93r, vid. q. note 4 below.

⁴ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanaire Finn: Patron and Text,' *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 105-6; Ó hUiginn has published an earlier version of this theory involving only the two surviving books in 'Duanaire Finn,' *An Fhiannaíocht: Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXV* (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart 1995), p. 67.

⁵ Some of these scribal comments are printed, though with some errors in *DF* I, pp. xviii-xix, and more completely and correctly in Paul Walsh, 'The Books of Captain Sorley MacDonnell,' *The Irish Ecclesiastical Review*, Ser. V, Vol. XXX, (Jul.-Dec. 1927), pp. 563-4.

⁶ The term is intended with the precise force discussed in part I. Vid. ch. II (c) for the scholarly nature of the MS by comparison to other Fenian *duanairidh* and III (b) concerning the patron's likely intent in commissioning the MS.

identified what it likely the grave of MacDonnell in the sacristy of the college, as the slab bears the same seal as the MS cover.⁷ Whether the book was given to the college for payment of the debt as Jennings conjectured, or inherited, it does not seem to have wandered far from Louvain. The MS remained there, where it was in the possession of Fr. Colgan until his death, A.D. 1658. Walsh has noted that it was used thereafter by Ó Sherrin. It remained in Louvain through 1792, as a lending note on the front fly-leaf testifies. The college was suppressed, A.D. 1793, and the Gaelic MSS were sent to St. Isidore's College, Rome.⁸ The MSS were moved about the Vatican and various ecclesiastical institutions during the French occupation of Italy, but were replaced in St. Isidore's thereafter, where they remained until 1872.⁹ An interesting sidenote to the location of the *Duanaire Finn* in Louvain is a comparison to the book of the O'Connor Don, also commissioned by MacDonnell, but which was owned by the Irish antiquarian Charles O'Connor, who was deceased before the *Duanaire Finn* ever left Louvain.

The Rev. Dean Lyons, who saw the Gaelic MSS in Rome, A.D. 1842, brought them to the attention of Irish scholars. He produced a tracing of the incipits of twenty MSS. From it O'Curry outlined a catalogue of the MSS in St. Isidore's College, Rome which he deposited in the RIA. A copy was published in Jeremiah Donovan's description of Rome's curiosities and antiquities, but individual poems were not named in his catalogue. In fact it is not even clear from the descriptions, filled with the errors of one who had not the slightest familiarity with the Irish hand, which volume is *Duanaire Finn*, although the Killiney catalogue conjectures that it is number nineteen ; Donovan's description follows in full¹⁰ : "Agallamh na Scamorach [sic], a second valuable copy."¹¹ O'Curry retained a copy of a letter containing a copy of the catalogue to the Rev. Reville, dated November 18th, A.D. 1843 ; this letter is now Killiney MS E 33.17,¹² says of the MS nothing more than "Agallamh na Seanorach again — This appears to

⁷ DF III, Appendix L, p. 219.

⁸ Walsh, op. cit., p. 565.

⁹ Cf. the published Killiney MS Catalogue for a list.

¹⁰ Cf. The Very Rev. Jeremiah Donovan, *Rome, Ancient and Modern and its Environs*, (Rome : Jeremiah Donovan, 1843), vol. 3, pp. 977-8, especially MS items 12, 13, & 19 of the list ; Killiney catalogue p. xxi, table 1 and note 57, "Some of the identifications made here of items in O'Curry's list are merely tentative owing to the brevity of his descriptions."

¹¹ Donovan, op.cit., p. 978.

¹² As a letter among papers of various sorts, it has been retained in Killiney, not given to UCD with the MS.

be a valuable copy and ought to be in Ireland." His statement to the Catholic University of Ireland regarding the St. Isidore's MSS was added as appendix CLVII to his *Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*.¹³ It does not appear that descriptions of the individual lays in the MS, or even the extent of the *duanaire* section, were known in Ireland prior to the arrival of the MS in Dublin. Attempts to have the MSS moved to the RIA in the 1840s, or even transcribed for that institution, failed. O'Curry tried again, A.D. 1859, to obtain them for the Catholic University of Ireland. From the time of the compilation of the MS to this point, the texts in A were unknown and unconsulted ; there can be no influence on Irish MSS or derivation of the texts of the lays by A, especially the text of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti,' which is edited in the following pages.

The MS finally made its way to Ireland from St. Isidore's A.D. 1872, when it appeared that the St. Isidore's College would be suppressed ; so the Irish MSS were sent to Merchants' Quay convent, Dublin. Mac Neill's statement in the introduction to *DF*, in which he placed the transfer to the occupation of Rome A.D. 1870, is thus faulty, as Fr. Walsh has demonstrated.¹⁴ The MSS of the Franciscan order in Ireland were consolidated in the new house of studies at Killiney, A.D. 1946. The non-theological MSS were again moved to the Archives of University College, Dublin for conservation and greater access in June, A.D. 2001.

The MS appears as it has since its repair at the opening of the twentieth century, with full descriptions in a number of publications.¹⁵ A is a paper MS, written in a number of sections. Apart from a large blank section in the middle, it has been interleaved in full. It is bound in vellum and boards. The MS measures eleven and a half by seven and a half inches. Mac Neill calls the binding new – and none have corrected him – but that is not precisely true, as the boards and vellum of the covers are original. It is only the spine which has been replaced, because the MSS more than doubled its thickness in the process of interleaving it. The spine has been labelled 'Sgealta, Duanaire Finn.' The cover bears the crest of Captain MacDonnell discussed above and the date 'Anno 1628.' Several leaves have been cut out, but all of the gaps fall within the *Agallamh na Seanórach* which comprises the first section. Apart from the table of contents at the start of the *duanaire* section, which is written tightly in two

¹³ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin : William A. Hinch & Patrick Traynor, 1861), pp. 644-8.

¹⁴ *DF* I, p. xxi ; Walsh, op. cit., p. 568.

¹⁵ Myles Dillon & al., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Franciscan Library, Killiney* (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies 1969), pp. 39-43 ; *DF* I, pp. xvii-xxii ; *DF* III, pp. ix-xi.

columns, the MS is written in single columns ruled evenly with a dry stylus. Following the *Agallamh* there is a fragmentary Fenian tale then a number of blank leaves. The contents page of the *duanaire* follows. The sections are numbered as folios, not pages, by the scribe, and the numbering of the stories breaks off with the tale fragment at f. 132. The blank leaves are, oddly, numbered 114-39 thereafter. The *duanaire* has its own numbering which commences with the first poem as f. 1, and the text continues to f. 94r. An unrelated short poem has been added to the last leaf.¹⁶ There are usually thirty-six lines of text to the page, but the number varies a bit due to scribal practices, such as the occasional decision to finish a poem on a page with an extra line or two, or to accommodate an ornate capital and leave a blank line to divide poems.

The hand of Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, in which the whole *duanaire* section of the MS is written, is highly idiosyncratic, although very clear. His script, whilst at its core the traditional *corr-litir*, has assumed a number of features from Continental Roman scripts. A Roman capital style *r* is often used in all positions within words, side by side with the usual Gaelic *r* and the *or* ligature. Sometimes *g* has a flourish on and curl to the left of its cap. Final letters, especially *d*, *e*, or *t* often have dramatic flourishes. Roman *s* makes an occasional appearance, especially in final position. Both the 7 'ocus' and a Romance *&/et* are written ; the latter predominates. There are numerous contractions and suspensions. Most of them are fairly standard. *Z* is frequently employed for any number of vowel-and-*s* combinations. Tall *e* is often used alone for any number of combinations. An odd baroque curlicue on *t* is used as an *ar* suspension in addition to the more usual one. The spelling is highly inconsistent. Sometimes vowel glides are provided, and just as frequently they are omitted. Doubled consonants are used alongside the modern representations for voiced medial and final consonants. In short, archaic spellings looking back to Middle Irish usage and orthographical modernisms intermix, even in the same phrase. Eclipsis is usually indicated by a doubling in which *f*, *g*, *t* are ligatured tightly. Marking of long vowels is sporadic. Lenition is normally indicated ; it tends to vary between the careful mini-*h* and the punctum. *H* is also used occasionally, especially to have a tall letter wherefrom to hang a suspension stroke. (Mac Neill's portion of *DF* reproduces the puncta and *hs* as they stand in A exactly.)

The initials of each poem have an ornamented capital, and each couplet has a capital

¹⁶ 'Olc mo thuras sonn ó Lundain', f. 94 r. Vid. *Killiney Catalogue* p. 43 for a list of editions of it.

initial ; sometimes short words such as the copula, *ní*, or *iar* are wholly capitalised. The initials are set off from the text and placed in the margin. The poems are presented with one couplet to the MS line with the verses separated by a full stop. Punctuation is otherwise absent altogether. The *dúnadh* of each poem is written in large letters directly under the last word and is set off by flourishes of two parallel horizontal lines with three dots between them to its right and its left.

Duanaire Finn : The Printed Edition

The entirety of the *duanaire* in A has been published in the Irish Texts Society with notes and some vocabulary.¹⁷ It is of a high standard, and suffers relatively few egregious misreadings or mistranslations for a work of such an age, although the publication of A *Dictionary of the Irish Language* and advances in philology now allow for greater precision. A new edition is chiefly needed for reasons of linguistic clarity. Not only are the layers of Mac Neill's and Murphy's corrigenda unfriendly to the reader, but they emend emendations and quarrel with each other. The poems in the first half of the MS which was edited by Mac Neill in A.D. 1908 was presented in the Petrie B *cló Gaidhealach* typeface which lacked boldface and italics.¹⁸ Thus, it is impossible to see what is actually present in the MS and what is Mac Neill's expansion in that edition. Precise analysis of the poems and especially comparison of the recensions of 'Síothal Chaoilti' require a modern edition. Gerard Murphy has a large number of corrections of Mac Neill's work, which is contained in his volume of notes. Apart from the correction of Mac Neill's misreadings, Murphy provides many other notes. Many of the suggestions that Murphy makes for reconstruction of corrupt forms are valuable, but he is a heavy-handed editor with a tendency towards rewriting texts to his idea of how they should appear. His notes will often be cited, but few of his 'corrections' will be integrated into these editions ; where they are used, they will be footnoted. Murphy's linguistic notes, apart from

¹⁷ *Duanaire Finn*, Éoin Mac Neill & Gerard Murphy edd., 3 vols. (London: ITS, 1908, 1933, & 1954).

¹⁸ For a full explanation of the font and the limitations of the type, vid. Dermot McGuinne, *Irish Type Design* (Dublin : Irish Academic Press, 1992), especially plate 8.8, p. 108, which presents the full range of type used in Mac Neill's edition. It is an interesting sidenote that the Irish Text Society seldom had access to the Petrie fonts, which were owned by Trinity College and guarded most jealously against use by any save the college printing office : Petrie himself was once denied access to his own fonts. All the other volumes from that era employ Newman or Newman-based Figgins type, which had a seldom-used boldface in addition to the standard letterforms, but not italics.

his attempts at dating, which have been questioned of late,¹⁹ remain most valuable.

Other MSS of 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti'

RIA MS 24 P 5

This MS is next in importance to this study, as it contains both the best copy of 'Síothal Chaoilti' in the second recension and also the prose story of the lay. It also has numerous other lays. The 'Lay of the Headless Phantoms,' incipit *Téighim toisc d'fhulucchadh Finn*, which is equivalent to lay number XIII in *DF*, is among these, and the comparison of the recensions of these two texts has been discussed in Part I in the chapter on the language of the lays.

RIA 24 P 5²⁰ contains solely two copies of the *Agallamh na Seanórach*. The first copy is of a fairly standard recension of the text, but the second is unique, containing events not found in any other copy and interpolated lays within the text. Overviews of the MS, its history, and its contents are to be found in Douglas Hyde's article, 'The Reeves MS of the "Agallamh na Senorach,"'²¹ the introduction to Nessa Ní Shéaghdha's edition,²² and in the Royal Irish Academy's published catalogue.²³ A more recent discussion of the different recensions of the *Agallamh*, including the two different recensions in this MS, has been compiled by Nollaig Ó Muraíle and has been discussed above in part I chapter II.²⁴

Hyde's statement of the MS's history notes that it was

one of those collected by that fine old Ulster man Mac Adam, which at his death passed into the possession of the late Bishop Reeves. On the death of Dr Reeves they were sold, and the late Rev. Maxwell Close generously bought – with a little, but I think *very* little, assistance from others – a number of these

¹⁹ Cf. John Carey, 'Remarks on Dating,' *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 1-19. This paper is discussed in detail in part I, chapter IV of this study.

²⁰ Hereafter, P.

²¹ Douglas Hyde, 'The Reeves MS of the "Agallamh na Senorach,"' *Révue Celtique* XXXVIII (1921), pp. 289-95.

²² Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh na Seanórach*, 3 vols. (Dublin: Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1942-5). (Hereafter AS).

²³ *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin: Hodges, Figges, & Co., n.d.), fasc. III, item 93, p. 275-7.

²⁴ Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'Agallamh na Seanórach,' *An Fhiannaíocht: Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXV* (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart, 1995), pp. 96-127.

MSS. for the Royal Irish Academy. These are now known as the Reeves MSS.²⁵

Hyde continues to speculate that 'Some peculiarities of the orthography point to a northern origin. It may have been written in Antrim or Derry or Down.'²⁶ The hypothesis is entirely reasonable and backed by the northern locations of all of its recorded history. The names scattered about the margins of the MS, recorded in the catalogue description, do not elucidate the MS's origins further, as they are unidentifiable. Fortunately Nessa Ní Shéaghdha's great familiarity with the RIA MSS from her time as cataloger has given her an insight into the MS's origins : she recognised that the scribal hand of P is found in other MSS which have scribal signatures :

As an gcomparáid sin 'sé is dóichighe gurbh é *Padruic mac Óghannan* (Patrick McOnan sa bhéarla) do sgríobh í. Tá lss. eile san Acadaimh do sgríobh sé sin, .i. 24 P 5, 24 P 28, agus 24 L 36, agus tá an sgríbhneóireacht, an litriú, 7rl., ionnta ana-chosmhail leis an sgríbhneóireacht, 7rl. san lss. seo.²⁷

Patrick McOnan's other MSS are antiquarian, and have fly-leaf notes of the patrons for whom they were written. They are all dated to the last decades of the seventeenth century. MS 24 L 36, *Cath Muighe Leanna*, is dated 1685 ; 24 P 4, a copy of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, is dated 1687 ; 24 P 28, *An Cath Catharda*, is from 1698. The contents of P are thus typical of the scribe. The lack of the scribal name in P is unsurprising when the beginning of the MS, where he has signed the other MSS, is mutilated, as shall be described hereafter.²⁸

The MS is of fine-textured rag paper, measuring almost eight by six inches. It is bound in half-vellum, having been rebound A.D. 1953 using its previous bindings reënforced with a canvas spine underneath. Details of a number of page reversals and blank leaves added are listed in the RIA Reading Room copy of the catalogue and on a slip glued into the MS on a blank binding leaf, but none of the changes affect the portions of the MS considered in this study. The MS has been mutilated ; the first twenty pages are reduced to nearly illegible circular fragments, which were mounted in the 1940 repair noted in the published catalogue. The corners are replaced for thirty-nine leaves and intermittently thereafter. Several other leaves are illegible or missing. It has been paginated recently in pencil ; an older pagination in

²⁵ Hyde, op. cit., p. 289.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 290.

²⁷ AS I, pp. xxii-xxiii.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. xxiii-iv.

ink is intermittently visible. There is much foxing and damp-staining from the middle of the MS to the end, but the text has not suffered from it. One may surmise that the MS had an unbound life on a floor or shelf where the bottom suffered damp and the top excessive wear for a very long time. MS 23 L 22 is an early nineteenth-century transcript of P which predates some of the damage to the original ; any scholar who desired to do a more comprehensive study of the *Agallamh* MS would find it invaluable. 23 L 22 has not, however, been needed in the preparation of the texts in the following lay editions ; the texts with which this study is concerned are in a portion of the original where damage is confined to the margins.

The scribal hand is characterised by fluid loops in the top of characters, especially *f* and *s*, rather than the usual spiky letterforms. The scribe is also prone to spiraling baroque flourishes on the end-strokes of *g*, *e*, *t*, which are used as suspensions for vowel and *r*. *D* is small and cramped ; it is often easily confused with a very similar *t*, which is often almost closed by a strong upstroke on the right which often reaches the cap of the letter. Standard abbreviations and suspensions are employed. Large capitals in the margin begin sections of prose or poetic quatrains ; ornamentation thereof is sparse and in the same ink as the text. In the poem, the scribe appears to become impatient, as he begins the first few quatrains with ornamental capitals, but soon reverts to large ordinary letters. There are large ink blobs on several pages, most notably p. 171. Corrections have been made to the text in darker ink, but in the same hand. The same ink also appears to have been used for the intermittent early pagination. Several places where the scribe's pen was just about dry have been touched-up or retraced in the darker ink ; the tracing looks overcautious and unsteady. Both inks have faded to brown. There are no rubrications or stylus markings visible, but the writing is in straight, regular lines, eighteen to the page. No titles or headings are given to poems. The first word of the next page is in the bottom margin.

The poem is immediately preceded by the prose version of the tale, which begins on p. 376, and continued to the start of the poem. This prose tale is translated, although not edited, here. The text of the poem begins on p. 383 in the pencilled pagination and continues to p. 396. The text in P consists of 121 quatrains. Although portions of the P MS are illegible and fragmentary, the entire text of the poem is clear enough throughout. The poem is found in the second copy of the *Agallamh* following the parallel story in the prose account. It is written as poetry in the traditional manner with a couplet on each line, separated by a full stop, and is separated from the main body of the text, which resumes after it. Hyde's

suggestion that the poems in this *Agallamh* were the archetype of some of those in the *Duanaire Finn*²⁹ does not withstand closer inspection of the texts, as the discussion accompanying the stemma will demonstrate.

RIA MS 23 L 34

23 L 34³⁰ is an eighteenth-century paper MS of the typical *duanaire* type, measuring approximately eight inches by six and containing miscellaneous verse. It is a composite, as the pagination begins at 107 and continues to 250. Thereafter follows another section in another hand, numbered both 1-79 and with a continuation from the previous section. Maurice Newby wrote part I in Dublin, A.D. 1711, as his marginal notes testify ; the scribe of part II is Tadhg Ó Neachtain, as identified by Prof. O'Curry. The title pages of the section indicate that there was once material which is no longer in the MS. It is in a half-leather binding apparently from the time of its assembly into its present form. There are numerous marginal notes in the hand of one Micheál O Rághailliodh, who owned it. O'Curry obtained it from him for the Hodges & Smith collection, (it was No. 69 in the catalogue thereof), now in the RIA. There are scattered notes in O'Curry's own hand. Some few bits are decorated or written entirely with red ink, but the poem in question is in a strong black with no more than the usual fading and is totally unornamented. The poem is in the second section, which is almost entirely Ossianic, with only a few other poems interposed. It occupies pp. 315-23 of the MS.³¹

The handwriting of the MS is clear, with a fluid and almost cursive appearance ; almost all the letters of a word are ligatured. The writing of the section appears to have been fairly hasty, as there are many corrections which have been obliterated with horizontal hatching. Missed letters or words are inserted above with a caret as marker. Nevertheless, there are no suspension strokes: although some common ligatures (*ar*, *achd*, *n* strokes, &c.) are employed, all words are written in full. The scribe is very careful in his marking of long vowels and lenition. Tall *e* is employed consistently for *ea*, when the form of the following letter permits the ligature ; when it does not, short *e* is often written with a subscript *a* resembling a cedilla. The tall *e* is also often used with a tiny subscript *i*. Capital letters are used at the beginning of

²⁹ Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

³⁰ Hereafter, L.

³¹ *RIA Catalogue*, fasc. XXIII, item 1,007, pp. 2,867-87.

every quatrain and on proper nouns. The second couplet of each quatrain is indented.

The poem is numbered item 52, and is the antepenultimate item in the MS. The title of the poem has been crammed into the skipped line which separates the poem from its predecessor. Written in the slightly lighter ink of the notes and corrections, it is clearly an afterthought. Two lines of poetry comprise one of the text ; they are separated by a raised dot. There are usually thirty lines of text to the page with extra lines (32) on the last page of the poem, but fewer at the incipit (28). The lines are fairly straight, but do veer off a bit betimes, apparently shewing the preference for use of a straightedge whilst writing, but without measurement, ruling, stylus-markings, or rubrication.

The scribe has edited with extensive linguistic modernisation, especially of verbal forms, some of which are rewritten as corrections to his initial copying. He also has eliminated *post facto* accusative forms by removing nasalisation (e.g. q. 11a, p. 315). Thus the value of the text within the recension is somewhat reduced, but occasionally the original readings can be read yet through his crosshatching and can provide an insight into the apparently more archaic forms in his exemplar. There are 120 quatrains present, but q. 20 is an error, in which the first four words are of the next quatrain, but the rest is the previous quatrain repeated *literatim* ; the scribe has set it apart as an error with brackets made of dots and a long stroke of aggravation off of the final *e* of the quatrain. Thus there are 119qq. of text, equaling the complete text of P, save for the lack of q. 17 of P and the amalgamation of qq. 14a,b to 15c,d.

RIA MS 24 M 2

24 M 2³² is a nineteenth century paper MS, comprising a large, ruled notebook of 290 pages, measuring about twelve and a half inches by seven and a half and bound in half-leather. Several scribes compiled it as a collection of Ossianic verse, but some miscellaneous matter fills it from p. 277 to the end. A full description of the other scribes is found in the RIA catalogue. The hand in which the poem is written is that of Seaghan Ó Dalaigh (John O'Daly), and he has dated it 1855 ; it is in good, black ink, written with a broad-nibbed pen. A note on the inside of the front cover states that it was O'Daly MS 5, and was acquired by the RIA, A.D. 1869. It appears to be one of the MSS that O'Daly compiled or collected in the course of preparing the lays which he published in the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin*, vols. IV and VI, but no edition of the lay was produced, nor is any mention made of this lay anywhere in his

³² Hereafter, M.

publications or any volume of the Ossianic Society transactions.³³

O'Daly writes only one line of verse per line down the centre of the page. Some pages ignore the ruling and even try to cram in extra quatrains vertically, but there are always extraordinarily wide margins on each side of the page. The writing is very clear and careful. No abbreviation of any type is employed ; even *agus* is written in full each time. Every line is capitalised, as are all proper nouns. Eclipsed consonants are written in the modern fashion, but offset with a hyphen. Prefixed *h* or *t* are also separated thus. The apostrophe is used in all contractions. Modern punctuation has been employed throughout. It is by far the clearest MS of the poem. Unfortunately, this MS consistently respells words and modernises extensively. Many lines have been rewritten entirely with a modern substitution. The expansions O'Daly made are often faulty ; it appears that wherever he was uncertain what a suspension in his archetype represented, he filled in *-adh* or *-idh* without regard for the historical form of the word. There are occasional marginal notes or speculations in the same hand. The poem occupies pp. 115-26 of the MS and comprises 116qq. It is missing qq. 17, 44, 99, and 100 of P ; the first couplets of qq. 94 and 95 (equivalent to qq. 96 and 97 in P) are switched. Qq. 14 and 15 are amalgamated as in L.

Maynooth Renehan MS 69

Renehan 69³⁴ is an early nineteenth-century manuscript of paper, measuring ten and two-fifths by eight inches, bound in leather. It is among the MSS of the O'Renehan collection of the Russell Library, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. The MS is very thick, containing 474pp. The scribe is 'Micheál Ó Raghallaigh a scríobh an t-iomlán in Inis Díomáin ó 1848 go 1853.³⁵ The volume contains four unnumbered pages with notes on the sources and a table of contents. The next seventy numbered pages contain poetry. Two Fenian lays follow, then a blank page (76). *Sítheal Chaoilte* begins on p. 77 and continues to p. 82. More Fenian lays follow and other poetry becomes interspersed with it again through to the end. The scribe makes a statement on the origins of his texts on the title page, which is given here with the identification of the likelihood of a common exemplar with L, as Ó Fiannachta suggests :

³³ *RIA Catalogue*, fasc. XV, item 600, pp. 1,900-4.

³⁴ Hereafter, R.

³⁵ *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Cholaíste Phádraig Má Nuad* (Maigh Nuad : An Sagart, 1943-72), vol. IV, p. 50 ; MS pp. i, 1, 13, 33, 158, & 427.

"Duanaire dín-shuarc Uí Rághallaigh do chomhnuís a nInnse Diomáin an tan fód aois don Tighearna 1853." Lean. brollach : "Do cnuasuigheadh na danta so as iliomad do sheanleabhruibh do thárlaidh liom san tir so, go sonráighthach a bhfuil do laoitheibh na Féinne ann as leabhar do sgriobhadh a mBaile Átha Cliath tuille agus dá chéad bliadhain ó shoin (cf. RIA 23 L 34, Cat. lgh 2868, 2873-2875)...³⁶

In the catalogue, Ó Fiannachta thus identifies L as a related MS which has similar Fenian contents, as shall be discussed in the following stemma.

The writing is typical, with some contraction but very few suspensions. The hand is fairly square with angular tendencies ; it is written with a fairly broad pen nib in a dark black. Spelling is modernised, but not all glides are added to *e*. The presentation of the page is idiosyncratic. The page is ruled with straightedge, but further lines are crammed vertically into the margin where there is room, with ruling at odd angles to accommodate them. The apostrophe is used for all elisions. Punctuation is sporadic, save for a full stop separating verses in a single line of text. The lay occupies pp. 77-82 of the MS and contains 119qq. (lacking q. 17 of P and amalgamating qq. 14 and 15 as LM).

Stemma of the Poem

The lay is represented by two recensions. The first of these is found in Killiney MS A 20 The *Duanaire Finn* only, whereas four other MSS ; RIA 24 P 5, RIA 23 L 34, RIA 24 M 2, and Maynooth R 69 ; contain a single recension. For this second recension, there is a printed diplomatic edition within Nessa Ní Shéaghda's *Agallamh na Seanórach*, which is based solely upon 24 P 5. Her edition contains neither analysis nor discussion of the text, and it has been prepared without reference to the other MSS of the recension. There are no published texts of the sub-recension L, M, or R, all of which are in late Fenian *duanairidhe*, which contain a text of close relation to that in 24 P 5, but even closer to each other.

A few notes on the P poem are to be found in Gerard Murphy's third volume (notes) to the ITS edition of *Duanaire Finn*.³⁷ He notes it as a major desideratum to have the 24 P 5 text (the only other known at that time) published and compared to his text. Nessa Ní Shéaghda undertook part of the task, A.D. 1942, by her diplomatic edition of the MS, but no analysis and

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *DF* III, p. 37.

comparison has been undertaken.³⁸

L, M, and R are virtually unknown to scholarship, lacking altogether any mention in print apart from their entries in the published MS catalogues of the RIA, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and Nessa Ní Shéaghdha's mention in passing of L.³⁹ Mac Neill and Murphy appear to have been unaware of these later copies, as the catalogues of the libraries where they are located were incomplete until long after publication of their work.

Although LMR do not appear to be derived from P, the tendency to be vaguest or to emend is highest in the passages where P is most muddled. It is likely that these MSS share in the archetype of P, which could have been mutilated or difficult to read at points. A common archetype of LMR is suggested by the lack of quatrain 17 in all three of these MSS, suggesting that it was not in their archetype in addition to minor verbal innovations which all have. These three MSS also sometimes have a reading in common, often reflecting A, where P shews signs of scribal error. Quatrain 45 repeats *Áth Lúain* in P, but the sense is preserved by *Áth Cuain* in LMR, also A. LMR all amalgamate 14a,b of P to 15c,d, thus missing half of each of those quatrains. Since the three do not share in P's errors nor innovate to correct them, but rather have errors of their own in common, LMR must be copies from a MS closely related to P. The title page of R, as cited above, notes that the Fenian lays therein were copied from a MS over two hundred years old when R was written, and which was then in Dublin. The similarities between L and R which Ó Fiannachta has noted in his catalogue may be extended to M by a glance at the respective contents of the MSS and the text of this lay in particular. Thus there is a MS which is most likely of the seventeenth century behind LMR which cannot by contents or textual tradition be P; and which is, by the description of Ó Raghallaigh unlikely to be P's archetype, but contains a text (*β) which shares the recension in P fairly closely. The consistent modernisms in orthography of LMR argue against giving *β a greater age. In fact, it would have been highly innovative for the period whereof it is alleged to be. Ó Raghallaigh may be suspected of hyperbole in estimating the age of his exemplar for a paying patron. In chapter VIII of the previous section, the connexion of the *Síthiol Chaoilti* to the crosier, bell, and book of S. Patrick has been explored at length. The *bachall Padruig* and other Patrician relics were originally in Armagh, but from the twelfth century onwards, the crosier was in

³⁸ Although the third volume of *Duanaire Finn* was published in 1953, its text had been finished in 1942, and much of its commentary dates from the Thirties. Murphy's text thus shews no awareness of Ní Shéaghdha's work which was in fact later than his own.

³⁹ Ní Shéaghdha, op. cit., vol. I, p. xxi.

Dublin. One might suggest that the presence of the objects described in the Dublin area and the exemplar of LMR being in Dublin are not coincidental. Furthermore, the northern A is suggestive of an early separation of an older 'Ulster' recension preserved in A, and a modernised 'Dublin' (or possibly Meath school) recension from $*\beta$ surviving in LMR. The 'Dublin' text in P requires an earlier archetype of the recension ($*\alpha$) to have been either outside Dublin, likely closer to the origin in Armagh or more widely circulating, either of which is reasonable.

As the discussion of A notes, that MS cannot have been an influence or source for the other MSS. Not only are the other MSS of a different recension, but A was written on the continent and remained there, unknown to Irish scholars until 1843, after which it was known only in Ireland that there were three MSS of Fenian material, including two full copies of the *Agallamh* in Rome, but the information then available did not include incipits or headings identifying poems in the MSS. A is the sole extant MS of its recension, and no other lost MSS are anywhere mentioned. As most of the poems in A are found only in that MS, it is not likely that A's exemplar for the poem survived the upheaval of seventeenth-century Ireland.

The stemma proposed is that both recensions derive from a common Middle Gaelic archetype, $*\Omega$, which will be analysed linguistically following the editions. A descends through an independent chain of descent with an unknown number of intermediaries, which account for its innovations, mixed orthography, and loss of quatrains of obvious antiquity found only in the other recension. The second recension shares a common archetype $*\alpha$, derived from $*\Omega$, and which appears to have Classicised the orthography partially. $*\alpha$ appears to contain significant omissions and textual innovations. From $*\alpha$, there is evidence for two copies: $*\beta$ and P. $*\beta$, it has been noted, lacks q. 17 and has amalgamated qq. 14 and 15 into a single composite; furthermore, it has a decided love of the vowel *u* for unstressed broad vowels. It is characterised by heavy-handed textual modernisation and a desire to repair the metres through innovation in places where the text has degenerated. $*\beta$ is the archetype of L, M, and R, which are MSS of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One may infer that $*\beta$ was a rough contemporary of P, and one may further venture to place it in the seventeenth century, potentially in the area of Dublin or of Meath, both of which then had a strong scribal tradition. Therefore, P is the most significant source of the text of the recension, and shall be the basis of the text of the recension. The agreement of L, M, and R is nevertheless an independent witness to the archetype of P, although through a highly modernising intermediary, and the agreement of these MSS has been used to emend in several places where

P is faulty.

(b) Presentation of the Editions

The editions are presented in three parallel texts. The first line is a transcription without any changes save expansion of the MS contractions. The second is a critical edition based upon the best reading for those lays attested in multiple MSS and wherein some orthographical regularisation is imposed, but without full standardisation. The third is a literal translation.

For the diplomatic transcription, it is attempted to give a faithful representation of the text as it appears in the MSS. In most of the MSS, two lines of verse to the text line, separated by a full stop, are usual. This format has been employed for all editions. The separation of the lines is additionally preserved by a double space.

The notes have been divided. Notes relating to the MS readings appear as numbered footnotes. Notes relating to content and interpretation are given as lettered endnotes. A commentary on all words that are of interest for dating the poems, that are otherwise philologically noteworthy, or those that are equivocal in meaning, are given as a commentary numbered by quatrain and line at the end of each edition with a paragraph of philological summary of the language used. It must be noted that the relative terms 'early' and 'late' are used in the commentaries specifically with relation to the morphology and syntax of *Agallamh na Seanórach* as documented in Prof. Nuner's study of its language unless another point of reference is given.⁴⁰ Many of the words thus listed are not noteworthy individually ; the listings of all verbal forms which underwent significant change in Middle Gaelic – and more specifically those where both conservative and progressive forms are attested in the *Agallamh* – are tools for proportional analysis of the action of those changes. These lists thus provide reference to those arguments whereof Murphy printed the conclusions but not the evidence in his notes. Further discussions of the prevalence of forms is found in the discussion at the end of each edition and summarised in chapter IV(d) of part I.

Principles of Transcription

The following principles have been employed in the transcription:

1. Contractions are expanded silently when they are of definite and precise usage, such

⁴⁰ 'The Verbal System of the *Agallamh na Seanórach*,' *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XXVI (1957), pp. 230-310.

as the use of aspiration points for *h*, 7 for *adh*, backwards-*c* *con*, subscript *r*-strokes, *m*- or *n*-strokes. *S* with a stroke above it has been expanded silently as *(a)cht/-d*. The general bardic practice of writing the voiced consonant has been retained as the choice of the scribe of P ; otherwise the unvoiced consonant is written as the choice of most other scribes. Further details relevant to particular MSS editions will be noted in the individual introductions to the texts. The earlier MSS contain so many suspensions and contractions that to italicise these simple abbreviations would leave so much of the text italicised that it would obscure the more important scribal contractions and be thus counterproductive. Any non-standard usage of such abbreviations requiring additional or alternative expansion has, of course, been italicised.

2. Any contraction which has various possible meanings or orthographical representations has been italicised in expansion. Only the omitted letter(s) in superscript contractions have been italicised.

3. 7, *ocus*, has been retained, as the *Duanaire Finn* employs it and & side by side, and they have been retained as written.

4. Consonantal mutations have been left as they appear in the MS. No missing aspirations are supplied ; for they will appear in the critical edition, and the insertion will be transparent.

The Critical Edition

For the line of the critical edition, some general points may be outlined here:

1. Capitalisation is according to modern principles, and punctuation as required by the sense. In the case of line divisions, replacement of the full stops of the majority of MSS with punctuation or lack thereof is according to modern usage, as it is an invaluable aid to readability. The separation of the two lines of verse to one of text is preserved by a double space regardless of punctuation or lack thereof in the MS.

2. The spelling of the MS is highly varied. Both good Middle Gaelic and Classical spellings are employed side by side. All MSS mark lenition for most affected consonants ; the practice has been retained. Changes are in general silent, as they can be readily compared to the transcription above, wherefore a full listing of orthographical minutiae is unnecessary. The practices of orthographical presentation are very close to those employed by Lambert McKenna in his ITS volumes of bardic verse.⁴¹ The texts are not standardised, although they have been

⁴¹ Lambert McKenna, *Aithdioghluim Dána*, 2 vols. (Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1939-40).

regularised in orthography. An early modern Gaelic is the standard, as it reflects the earliest available MSS. There is no introduction of old forms or spellings not found in the text. To standardise fully to Middle Irish would ignore possible textual evolution or degeneration ; to Classicise the spelling in full would be unthinkable violence to survivals from the manuscript archetype. Old or Middle Gaelic forms for words which have undergone significant change in appearance, but which are not in the Classical modern language, are footnoted for greater transparency.

3. It has been necessary to break particles, prepositions, and the article from the following word with spaces. This has also been done silently.

4. Some standardisation of perverse or pseudoärrchaic spelling has been done, especially final *-cch*, which is merely *-gh* in pseudoärrchaic dress. Likewise, use of *ph* for *bh* is eliminated. The standard *bhf-* initial is used always in place of *bfh-* or *bhfh-* ; the older *ff-* is tolerated also. *Gh* and *dh* are regularised according to the best historical usage.

5. The nominative, accusative, and dative singular of the article and the masculine genitive singular article are generalised as *in*, as the MSS have *in* and *an* interchangeably.

6. Consonantal mutations missing in the MS have been supplied.

7. Vowel glides are supplied in general, although *é* is allowed to stand alone according to Early Modern usage. The vowels of unstressed syllables within the stems of words have been historicised.

8. The mark of length has been left on diphthongs and triphthongs, even where unnecessary (ex. *áo* and *aoí*), but has not been supplied in such cases as it is not in the MS.

9. There is a general tolerance of minor orthographical variations, ex. the dative plural ending is written *-aibh*, *-oibh*, and *-uibh*. *Sb*, *sg*, *sd*, appear alongside *sp*, *sc*, *st*. The only exception, as discussed further below, is that proper names are standardised for easy location within the indices.

Other instances of orthographical modification are obvious enough, as they stand next to the unmodified transcription above them. In general, the attempt is to take a middle course of presenting the orthography in a fashion consistent with the best scribal practice of Classical Modern Gaelic for purposes of transparency, but without undue modernisation of older forms or spellings. Many acceptable variant forms have been left in coexistence, even in close proximity. The spelling practices of Dinneen's lexicon have generally been used as the standard, metre and rhyme permitting ; *DIL* has been consulted to find the original forms of

words not found therein.

Proper names are always standardised to the best form for purposes of easy reference in the *indices nominum et locorum*. The standardisation has been undertaken between different poems as well as within, provided that the forms are not metrically different. Where the forms of a name in different lays or recensions are irreconcilable, they are not standardised save within the form. For such entries the indices will usually have two entries with cross-references, although a few that differ metrically by an inserted vowel or by the addition of a lenited consonant are combined with the letters in question in parentheses.

No complete metrical reconstruction has been attempted in general, but faulty count which cannot be resolved without speculation is marked with the traditional '(I.)' for *lochtach* found in the bardic grammars.

Principle of translation

Every attempt has been made to translate as literally as possible without doing violence to the English language by the creation of a 'translationese.' In many ways, however, representation of the Gaelic means that it is necessary to employ registers of English which are well-removed from ordinary speech. The Gaelic of this lay is layered, with more modern and older forms side by side. The language is overall, regardless of period, within the strict confines of a poetic register which is highly developed. Whilst not desiring to create a pseudoarchaic monstrosity, it appears seemly to dip into the Victorian poetic register for formal language to flavour the English. The thou/ ye distinction has been made throughout to reflect the usage in the Gaelic. The high register has also given the liberty to use the English subjunctive freely to reflect Gaelic verbal forms more accurately. Occasionally a more blatant archaism is employed to draw attention to changes in the Gaelic or retention of vocabulary which had dropped from use long before the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century MSS in which these lays are preserved were written, such as 'musickal' for the more archaic *ceolach*, but these are limited in the desire to be clear above all else. The intent in such use of deliberate archaism is not to imply an equivalence between how these forms in the original would be perceived by a Gaelic-speaking audience, of to-day or any historical period, but rather is selected in order to alert the English reader that there is a change in the register of the original text.

The integrity of the line, (or when absolutely necessary the couplet at minimum,) has been maintained when translating, even where it results in strings of postponed appositives to

the subject. No attempt has been made to represent the metre ; all translations are given in prose.

Place-names have been left in Gaelic rather than translated literally or Anglicised ; geographical clarity is difficult, especially when some of the places are unknown, so translation to Anglo-Irish usage is of doubtful benefit. Literal translations of the meanings of the names and possible locations have been left to the *Index Nominum* and also mentioned in the content notes following each lay where important to the sense of the text. The exception is for Classical names that appear in Gaelic orthographical dress ; these have been gently put into English in translation for clarity, e.g. *Traoí* to Troy. Most personal names have not been altered in any fashion either, but for a few exceptions, most of which are attempts to avoid being overly pedantic. Thus MacPhersonic versions of the names of the primary characters are shunned and the characters are left as Caoilte, Oisín, and Fionn. On the other hand, The common Patrick for *Pádraig* is employed in reference to the Apostle of Ireland, but substitution is an exception. Lastly, Fionn's patronymic has been given two treatments. Alone, it is not translated, as it is familiar enough in English, but in the extended formula *Fionn mac Cumhaill mheic Tréanmhóir...*, it seems best to the ears when rendered as a genealogical phrase.

II : *Laoidh an Chorr-Bholga*

Incipit 'Ceisd agam ort a Chaoilte'

This edition based on the sole MS, A ; the principles and presentation are as outlined in the General Introduction.

This lay is a puzzling fragment. It ends abruptly with no *dunadh* and with roughly a century undescribed between Conaire, the last owner of the *corr-bholg* mentioned, and Cumhall. It appears that the lay is simply incomplete as it has descended in the MS. The lay becomes more mysterious when it is seen to share plot details and character names with a lay in P, although there is no textual relationship between them, (see note c below and discussion of the lay in Part I). The final complication is that the speakers are unclear. The primary narrator is Caoilte, but the second speaker appears, unless one emends the text by rejecting the corrupt q. 15, to be Oisín rather than Patrick, unless all three are present : see note A. Identification of the speakers is thus tentative.

(10 r.) 1. Ceisd agam ort achaoilte. afhir na nárm niomlaoíte
[Oisín? Pádraig?:] 'Ceisd agam ort, a Chaoilte a fhir na n-árm n-iomlaoíte,
[Oisín? Patrick?:] 'I have a question for thee, O Caoilte, man of clashing weapons,

cía ga raipe in corrbholg cóir. do bhoí ag cumhall mac trenmhóir
cía ga raipe in corr-bholg^b cóir do bhoí ag Cumhall mac Trénmhóir?
Whose was the comely round pouch that Cumhall son of Tréanmhór had?

2. Corr do bhoí ag manannán mhín. fa sead ilbhúadhach go mbrígh
Corr do bhoí ag Manannán mhín — fa séad iol-bhúadhach go mbrígh —
[Caoilte:] Mild Manannán had a crane — it was a most precious treasure for its powers —

día croicionn sin coinndealb borb. de do ríghneadh in corrbholg
día croicionn sin co ndealb¹ borb, de do-ríghneadh in corr-bholg.
from her skin of rough appearance, from it the crane-bag was made.

3. INnis duinne cread in chorr. acaoilte go niolar nglond
[Oisín?:] 'Innis dúinne, créad in chorr, a Chaoilte go n-iolar n-ghlond,
[Oisín?:] 'Tell us, whence the crane, O Caoilte of the many deeds,

nó cread far cuireadh afhir. a croicionn fana séadaibh-
nó créad far cuireadh, a fhir, a croicíonn fana séadaibh
or wherefore, sir, her skin was put around the treasures.

4. Aiffe ingean dealbháioith dhil. leannan ilbric iolcrothaigh
[Caoilte:] 'Aoife inghean Dealbháioith dhil leannán Ilbric iol-chruthaigh,
[Caoilte:] 'Aoife, daughter of dear Dealbhaoth, lover of Ilbreac of much beauty,

tarla for seirc in fhir hí. & iuchra co ccáimhlí
tarla for seirc in fhir hí agus iuchra co ccáimh-lí.
love of the man befell her and iuchra of beautiful complexion.

5. Cealguis lúchra chum snámha. aiffe nocar chuairt ágha
Cealguis Lúchra chum snámha Aoife — nochar chuairt ágha —
luchra tricked Aoife to go swim — it was no visit of good-result —

¹ Mac Neill translated as 'strange thing to prize', without giving his reasoning ; Murphy emends '*coindealg borb* "fierce comparison"', which appears a more heavy-handed emendation than necessary.

dar cuir hí tré luinne amoigh. ariocht cuirre fo cuirrchibh-
 dar cuir hí tré luinn² amoigh i riocht cuirre fo cuirrchibh.
 whence she through wrath sent her away in the form of a crane into the moors.

6. Fíeafraighis aoíffe íear sin. dingin aluinn ábhartaigh
 Fíeafraighis Aoife iar sin d'inghin aluinn Ábhartaigh,^b
 Thereafter Aoife asked the beautiful daughter of Ábhartach,

ga fad bhíad sa riocht so abhean. aiuchra aloinn uichtgheal
 "Gá fad bhíad sa riocht so a bhean a luchra aloinn uicht-gheal."
 "How long shall I be in this form, O lady, O beautiful white-bosomed Luchra?"

7. An críoch chuirfead ní *bidh* gearr. ort aaoíffe na rosc rómhall
 "In chríoch chuirfead ní *bidh* gearr ort a Aoife na rosc rómhal :
 "The end I set shall not be short for thee, O Aoife of the quiet eyes :

beirsi da chead blíadhuin bán. attigh mhíadhaigh mhanannán
 beir-sí dá chead blíadhain bán i tígh mhíadhaigh Mhanannán.
 thou shalt be two hundred empty years in the house of noble Manannán.

8. Bíaidh tú sa tigh sin do gnáth. ag fanamhat fúth do chách
 Bíaidh tú sa tigh sin do gnáth ag fonamhat fúth do chách,
 Thou shalt be in that house always, all having spite for thee,

ad chuirr nach ttaisdil gach tír. noch attacfainn tú eantír
 id chuirr, noch thaisdil gach tír, noch attacfainn tú éan-tír.
 as a crane that visited every land, thou shalt not reach one land.

9. Do gheantor soightheach maith séad. dot croicionn ní³ beag in béal
 Do-gheantor saightheach maith séad dot croicionn – ní beag in béal –
 A great collector of treasures shall be made of thy skin – no small matter –

bidh é a ainm is ní breag dhamh. corrbholg na séad fó dheireadh
bidh é a ainm- is ní breag dhamh– corrbholg na séad fó dheireadh."
 its name shall be – and it is no lie for me — the Crane-bag of the treasures in the end."

10. Do rinne manannán sin. don croicionn od fúair oighidh
 Do-rinne Manannán sin don chroicionn ód fhúair oighidh ;
 Manannán made that from that skin when she got her fate ;

do bhí fo gach séad dhiobh sin. aige ní breag na deaghaidh
 do bhí fo gach séad dhíobh sin aige – ní bréag – 'na deaghaidh.
 it was around every one of the treasures that he had after that — tis no lie.

11. Léine mhánannáin sa sgíean. is crios goibhníonn ar áonríean
 Léine Mhanannáin 's a sgíean is crios Goibhníonn ar áon ríán,
 Manannan's shirt and his knife and the belt of Goibhne in one arrangement,

duphán gabhann ón fhíor bhorb. séoid do bhíodh issin chorr-bholg
 †dubhán Gabhann† ón fhíor bhorb : séoid do bhíodh issin chorr-bholg.
 †the kidney?/hook? of Gabhann/the smith?†⁴ from the wild-man : treasures that used to be in
 the Crane-bag.

² Gen. for dat. of *lonn*- a MS error where the vowel, were it present, would elide.

³ *Maith* has been written and deleted with puncta.

⁴ Mac Neill 'a smith's hook', but Murphy dismisses the translation.

12. Deimhios rígh alban gan fheall. & cathbharr ríogh lochlann
 Deimhios ríogh Alban gan fheall agus cathbharr ríogh Lochlann
 The shears of the King of Scotland without treachery and the helmet of the King of Lochlann

do bhoí ann re ráithe sin. & cnamha muc nasail
 do bhoí ann re ráithe⁵ sin agus cnamha muc n-Asail.
 those things were in it for a time and the bones of the pigs of Asal.

13. Crios do dhruimnibh an mhíl mhóir. do bhoí sa corrbolg chóir
 Crios do dhruimnibh in mhíl mhóir do bhoí-sa corr-bholg chóir,
 The belt made of the back of the great whale was in the comely Crane-bag,

adearsa riot gan dochar. do bhíodh ann ga iomachar
 adear-sa riot gan dochar ; do bhíodh ann gá iom-machar.
 I tell thee without mischief ; it used to be in it for its carrying.

14. IN tan do bhíodh in muirlán. ba follus a hséoid ar alár
 In tan do bhíodh in muir-lán, ba follus a shéoid ar a lár ; (l.)
 When the tide would be full, its treasures were clearly in its middle ;

inúair fa tráigh in muir bhorb. folamh fo deóigh in corrbholg
 in úair fa tráigh in muir bhorb, folamh fo deóigh in corr-bholg.
 when the rough sea was ebbing, empty was the Crane-bag in the end.

15. Ag sin duit aoissin fhéil. mar do ríghneadh é búdhdein
 Ag sin duit a hOisín fhéil : mar do-ríghneadh é búdhdein,
 Thou hast it then, noble Oisín : how this itself was made,

agus inneosad feasda. a imthus ahimteachta
 agus innéosad feasda a iomthus, a himtheachta.
 and I shall tell now its adventures, its migrations.

16. Ro bhoí in corrbholg ré⁶ fada. ag lughláochda lamhfada
 Ro bhoí in corr-bholg ré fada ag Lugh láochda lámh-fhada
 The Crane-bag long was warlike Lugh long-arm's

no gur thuit in rígh fo dheóigh. le macaibh cearmada milbheoil
 no gur thuit in rígh fo dheoid le macaibh Cearmada míl-bheoil.
 until the king fell in the end, by the sons of Cearmad honey-mouth.

17. Do bhí in corrbolg iear sin. aca sin ina deaghoidh
 Do bhí in corr-bholg iar sin aca sin ina dheaghoidh,
 The Crane-bag after that was theirs after him,

gur thuitsiod in tríar *gidh mear*. lé macaibh mora míleadh
 gur thuitsiod in tríar *gidh mear* le macaibh mora Míleadh.
 until the trio, though valiant, fell by the great Sons of Míl.

18. Tainic manannán gan sgís. rucc leis in corrbholg arís
 Táinic Manannán gan sgís ; rucc leis in chorr-bholg arís ;
 Manannán came without fatigue ; he took with him the Crane-bag again ;

⁵ Mac Neill, reading *raite*, translated 'to be told of'.

⁶ the MS has *go*, then corrects with *.l.*, and continues.

(10 v.) níor taisbéin é do dhuine. go ttainic ré conaire
 níor taisbéin é do dhuine go ttáinic ré Conaire.
 he shewed it to no man until the era of Conaire^d came.

19. Ro codail conaire cáomh. do leath táoibh teamhrach na ráon
 Ro chodail Conaire cáomh do leath-táoibh Teamhrach na ráon ;
 Dear Conaire slept beside Teamhair of the plains ;

mar do musgail in glan glic. frith in corrbolg fá braguit. &c.
 mar do mhusgail in glan glic fríth in chorr-bholg fá bhraguit.' &c.⁷
 as the pure, wise one awoke the Crane-bag was found around his neck.' &c.

Notes

^aQuatrain 15 identifies the first speaker in this colloquy as Oisín. The result is an *Agallamh*-derived lay in which S. Patrick is possibly absent, and the ancients speak to one another. If one assumes that Patrick is the first speaker, then either Oisín in q. 15a is a scribal slip, all three are present, or it is a remnant of an earlier form of the lay whence the present fragment is incompletely adapted. If the last be the case, then the opening quatrains are an accretion, yet they contain good early linguistic forms. The textual problem of the identification of the speakers raises the possibility that this lay is dependent on a no longer extant *Agallamh* for context.

^bIt would appear that the word is a pun where the question is framed truer than intended. *Corr-bholg*, with the common prefix *corr*- is an everyday phrase for a rounded or oddly shaped bag, and no reader would suspect that the line was to be read otherwise until the following quatrain was encountered. *Corr* is also, however, the general term for cranes, herons, and such types of water-fowl: 'any bird of the crane or heron kind ; a stork, bittern, etc.' (Dinneen).

^cVid. Murphy's note (6b *DF* III, p. 21), in which he describes how Abhartach appears in the *Agallamh* of P, MS p. 429 in a lay, *A chorr úd thall san léana*, 146 qq., containing a similar sub-plot, which is summarised in Christiansen, pp. 418-9. The story, in brief, is a learned lay, in which Miadhach is made a crane by her father, King Eachdonn, for her refusal to withdraw her advances on Abhartach in favour of Eachdonn's foster-daughter. The crane then recounts to Oisín at length all of her animal loves since in the time since she took that form ; Oisín responds by launching into the lay of the Battle of Druim Crot against the Lochlannaigh, which is the main part of the text, from q. 39 through to the end, which only returns to address the crane in the last couplet. Abhartach is in the rôle of Ilbreac of the present poem, and the other names in the lay are dissimilar. No *corr-bholg* or any other such object is ever mentioned in the lay, as it is the crane, a living animal ancient, who addresses Oisín *an deidh na Féine*. The texts do not appear to have any direct relation. Nevertheless, that it occurs in 24 P 5 (printed in *AS* III, pp. 85-110) is significant, for it is the only other MS to contain the 'Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti' in addition to other contents in common which have been noted above.

^d*AFM* identifies Conaire as King of Ireland from A.D. 158 until he was slain in A.D. 165 ; Fionn's obit is given as A.D. 283. Another account of his place in the pseudo-historical tradition may be found in Céitinn's *FFÉ* (vol. II, pp. 268-9), but no date is given. Without assuming an exact enumeration of years from the synthetic history matching that in the lay, one may nevertheless surmise that there is a generation and a good bit of the story missing before the bag reaches Cumhall and then Fionn.

⁷ The poem lacks a *dúnadh*, and the lack is recognised by the scribe, who has indicated it thus.

Language

The following forms are worthy of note

1b *na n-árm n-iomlaoíte*, nasalisation of the adjective. *Iomlaoíte* is a rare word of somewhat uncertain connotation in this context, descended from OI *imlaít*, 'changing' or 'exchanging'. Murphy has discussed its meaning in his glossary, and his suggestions are in agreement with *DIL*.

3b *go n-iolar n-glond*, nasalisation following the analogical dative after a nasalising preposition. The words are unusual for such praises, and likely early.

4c *tarla*, for *do-rála*, and the accusative independent pronoun is used in apposition to Aoife from 4ab

5c accusative independent pronoun

8 *bíaidh tú... ad chuirr*, the verb is analytic, and the construction is *tá... ina*. Nevertheless, it is the type where *i* means 'as,' rather than the later construction of equasion (see § 7 of the dating criteria in part I, ch. III).

9a *saightheach*, a rare derivative from *saigid* that gave Murphy and Mac Neill. In legal texts it is noted in *DIL* as the technical term for a legal claimant or originator of a lawsuit, and more generally as an aggressor. Here it must have a meaning of a 'collector' closer to its verbal root. This word did not pass into the modern language.

9b *béad*, Prof. Murphy believed that the word is early, but he did not state his reasons for believing so. It did, in fact, survive into the Classical language, for it appears as in example for *IGT* declension § 39, l. 1075.

12d *cnamha muc n-Asail*, nasalisation following the gen. pl.

14b *ba follus a shéoid*, neither the copula nor the predicate adj. is inflected. One must note that the line is hypersyllabic (unless one permits the elision of *a*, which is totally improper in any period). One must suspect that there has been rewriting of this line.

15b *búhdhein*, an early form suggestive of MG

15c *innéosad*, the 1s fut. ending has the later fossilised *-d* of a meaningless suffix pronoun

17c *thuitsiod*, the *s*-preterite is a modernism from stem standardisation. A late MG sign.

18c accusative independent pronoun

Professor Murphy's conclusion was vague : 'The poem may belong to the 13th century,' although he grants that the language has a feel of late MG to him at times (*DF* III, p. 20). In the introduction table of dates (pp. cxvi-cxvii), he places it A.D. 1200. Overall, there is nothing to gainsay his judgement. The poem is but a fragment, and problematic in structure as may be seen in note A. Q. 14, which contains one of the few late syntactical structures, is obviously corrupt, although Prof. Murphy did not note that fact. If more weight is applied to the vocabulary, a date of 1200 seems reasonable, if conservative on the strength of the internal evidence. That the other poems of this type are of the 1150-1200 bracket in the judgement of Prof. Murphy suggests that what one does to the dates of some of the longer poems of like assigned date may be done fairly to this one also, such that A.D. 1175 looks about as likely.

III : *Laoidh Scéith Fhinn*

Incipit ' Uchán a sgíath mo ríogh réil'

An edition based on A, the sole extant copy, following the principles outlined in the General Introduction.

(15 v.) 1. Uchán a sgíeath mo ríogh réil. ionnsa do beath fó mísgéimh
[Oisín:] Uchán a sgíath mo ríogh réil ionnsa do beith fó mísgéimh,
[Oisín:] Alas, O shield of my rightful king, [it is] hard, thy being in a disfigured state,

doghra nach mair do triath teann. acomla sgíeath na heireann
doghra nach mair do triath teann, a chómhla sgíath na hÉireann!
a misery that thy powerful master lives not, O gate of the shields of Erin!

2. Mor ccosgar mor ccath calma. tugais is do tigearna
Mór ccosgar, mór ccath calma tugais is do tigearna
Great the spolia, great the valiant battles thou gavest, and thy lord also,

maith dion do cailc um reannaibh. a díon bhailc ar beimeannaibh
maith díon do chailc' um reannaibh, a díon bhailc ar beimeannaibh.
good the protection of thy chalk from spearpoints, O strong protection of blows.

3. Noca raibhe ar talmhain tréin. san aimsir tarraidh féin
Nocha raibhe ar talmhain tréin san aimsir tarraidh féin ;
Never was there on the mighty earth in the age that he himself got [thee] ;

nochar gabh sgíeath budh calma. no do triath is do tigearna
nochar gabh sgíath budh calma ná do thriath 's do thighearna.
No one more valiant took up a shield than thy master and thy lord.

4. Ba filidh ba fear dána. ba cath mhílidh comhdhála
Ba filidh, ba fear dána ; ba cath-mhílidh cómhhdhála :
He was a poet, a man of art ; he was a commander of assemblies :

ní frith asamhla um rathaibh. ba láoch calma agchrúadh-chathaibh
ní frith a shamhla um rathaibh ; ba láoch calma ag chrúadh-chathaibh.
none had his resemblance for liberalities ; he was a valiant warrior at tough battles.

5. Ba sáora ba ceardghobha glan. ba breatheamh ághmhar úrlam
Ba sáora, ba ceárd-ghobha glan ; ba breitheamh ághmhar urlamh
He was a craftsman ; he was a masterly smith ; he was a brave ready judge

mairg do bhíodh ar acionn abfeirge. bá saoi gacha saoir-chéirde
mairg do bhíodh ar a chionn i bhfeirge¹ (.l.) ; ba saoi gacha saoir-chéirde.
woe to the one in front of him in anger; he was a master of every free trade.

6. IS úathadh attalmhain tigh. muna affuil fáidh nó fisidh
Is úathadh i ttalmhain tigh muna a ffuil fáidh nó fisidh'
Few are there on the solid earth except who are a prophet or a seer,

¹ Murphy would emend *mairg do bhaoi ar chionn a fheirge*. Prof. Gillies has suggested *mairg bhaoi ar...*, which is a far more plausible solution. Nevertheless, the breaking of the usual pattern of internal rhyme in the couplet is a sign that there is likely a replacement or repair of the text on the part of the scribe that is not so easily reconstructed.

asgíeath rígh siccir seaca neach do fhittir h'imtheachta
 a sgíath rígh Siccir seaca, neach do-fhittir th'imtheachta.
 O shield of the King of frosty Sigear, ones who know thy adventures.

7. IS tearc fos ar talmhain sin. dfíor nó do mhnaoí do fhittir
 Is tearc fós ar talmhain sin d'fíor nó do mhnaoí do fhittir
 Few are on this earth yet of men or of women who know

(16 r.) in chuis fo ffuil a hainm amach. día gairm in seancholl snidheach
 in chúis fo ffuil th'ainm amach día gairm in Sean Choll Snigheach.
 the reason for which thy name abroad is known as Tearful Old Hazel.

8. Nochan fuil acht meisi féin. & caoílte fear co gceill
 Nochan fuil acht meisi féin agus Caoílte fear co gceill,
 There is not, but myself and Caoilte, a wise man,

is fionntan dhúine fearta. neach do fidir himteachta
 is Fionntan Dhúine Fearta neach do-fidir th'imteachta.
 and Fionntan of Dún Feart, ones who know its adventures

9. Ata ósoin sgíeath mo ríogh. adeirim ribh is fáth fíor
 Atá ó soin sgíath mo ríogh — adeirim ribh is fáth fíor —
 It is from then the shield of my King — I tell you it is a true explanation —

gan brath gan brón duine damh. go cath mór muighe tuireadh
 gan brath gan brón duine damh go cath mór Muighe Tuireadh.
 [was] without awareness to me, without the grief of men until the great Battle of Magh
 Tuireadh.

10. Balor do cuingidh ar lugh. seal beag ré na dhíceannadh
 Balor do cuingidh ar Lugh seal beag ré n-a dhí-cheannadh,
 Balor asks of Lugh a short while before his beheading,

cuir mo ceannsa ar do ceann cain. & tuill mo beannsusain
 'Cuir mo cheann-sa ar do cheann cain agus tuill mo bheannachtain.
 'Put my head to thy gentle head and earn my blessing.

11. In cosgar agus in gráin. do bhoí oramsa ag fearaibh fáil
 In cosgar agus in gráin do bhoí orm-sa ag fearaibh Fáil
 The slaughter and the horror that the men of Fál have had for me

is maith liomsa go prap dhe. a mbeith mac mhinghine
 is maith liom-sa go prap dhe i mbeith mac mh'inghine.'
 I want it to be [done] quickly for [thy] being my daughter's son.'

12. An beannacht sin a aba. noch ar thuill lámh fhada
 In beannacht sin a aba noch ar thuill Lámh-fhada ;
 That blessing nevertheless, Lámh-fhada did not earn ;

do cuir in ceann os tuinn thsoir. anglaic chuill ar a bhéluibh
 do chuir in ceann ós tuinn thoir i nglaic chuill ar a bhéaluibh.
 he put the head over the eastern wave in a fork of hazel in front of him.

13. Snídhis bainne neimhe anúas. assin crannsin go neartchrúas
 Sníghis bainne neimhe anúas assin crann sin go neart-chrúas ;
 A poisonous fluid dripped from that tree, powerfully strongly ;

iar snídhe inuile nar bheag ró. do sgoilt in crann ar cheart dhó

iar sníghe in uile nár bheag ró, do sgoilt in crann ar cheart-dhó.
by dripping of that oil that was not small in amount, the tree rent right in twain.

14. Fri ré cháogat mbliadhain mbil. don choll gan chor dhá chosaibh
Fri ré cháogat mbliadhain mbil don choll, gan chor dhá chosaibh
For the interval of fifty good years for the hazel, without dropping from its supports

acht a beith fo dhámhna déar. na adhbha bádhbh is bran éan
acht a beith fo dhámhna déar 'na adhbha bádhbh is bran-éan.
but to be a cause of tears as an abode of vultures and ravens.

15. Luidh manannán in ruisc chuirr. go dithreabh sléibhe finnuill
Luidh Manannán in ruisc chuirr go dithreabh Sléibhe Finn-chuill,
Manannán of the round eye went to the wasteland of Sliabh Finn-chuill,

fo ffacaidh crann gan folach. ameach na ccrann gcomramhach
fo ffacaidh crann gan folach i measc na ccrann gcómhramhach.
where he sees a tree without foliage in the midst of the glorious trees.

16. Cuiris manannán lucht oibre. ar in crannsin gan loige
Cuiris Manannán lucht oibre ar in crann sin gan laige
Manannán sent workmen to that tree without weakness

dia tohailt atalmuin tréin. robadh gníomh ádhbhal eissein
día tohailt a talmuin tréin, ro badh gníomh ádhbhal eissein.
for digging it from the hard earth, which would have been a mighty deed.

17. Eirgis deathach neimhe aníos. abun in croinnsin gan sgíos
Eirgis deathach neimhe aníos a bun in croinn sin gan sgíos.
A poisonous mist rose from below from the base of that tree without cessation.

no gur marbh fa báoghal de. nonbhor do lucht na hoibre
no gur marbh — fa báoghal de — naonbhor do lucht na hoibre.
so that it killed — it was the danger of it — nine men of the workmen.

18. Ro marbh nonbhor oile dibh. do mhuinntir mhanannáin mhín
Ro marbh nónbhor oile díbh do mhuinntir Mhanannáin mhín,
It killed nine other men of them of the people of gentle Manannán,

sgéla on crann do fear damh. is do dhal in treass nonbhar
sgéla ón gcrann do fear damh, is do dhal in treas-naonbhar.
tales of the tree have been given to me, and it blinded a third nine men.

19. Adeirimsi ribhsi dhe. fiafraighthear in fáisdine
Adeirim-si ribh-si dhe — fiafraighthear in fáisdine ;
I tell you of it — let the prophecies be consulted ;

fan coill nadhbhal sin gan tár. do frith mor nadhbhar ochán
fan coill n-adhbhal sin gan tár do frith mór n-adhbhar ochán.
beneath that great hazel without degrading many causes of woe were found.

20. IS é lucra sáor do chum. in sgiath eangach bláith éadtrom
Is é Lucra sáor do chum in sgiath eangach bláith-éadtrom
Lucra is the craftsman who formed the gusseted shield, light as a blossom

tríath na marannmhál don moigh. do mhanannán don mhlídh

tríath na Marannmhál den moigh do Mhanannán don mhílidh.
the lord of Marannmhál of the plain, for Manannán, for the soldier.

21. Da bhúaidh do bhúadhaibh in sgíeath. gan gabháil ría accath nó ccléith
Dá bhúaidh do bhúadhaibh in sgíath : gan gabháil ría i ccath nó ccléith ;
Two powers of the shield's powers : [it is] without possibility of withstanding in battle or
skirmish ;

tearc sgíeath amaca samhla. reimpe ba ráon ró mhadma
tearc sgíath a maca samhla ; reimpe ba rian² ró-mhadma.
scarce a shield [was] like it ; before it, the path was a rout indeed.

22. Cath agcruitheanthúaiith nar lag. in ceadcath tugadh lat
Cath i gCruithean-thúaiith nár lag in céad cath tugadh lat,
A battle in the province of the Cruithne that was not the first battle won by thee,

dar gáoth mothla mac méilge. airdrigh adhbhal éigipte
dar gháod³ Mothla mac Méilge aird-rígh adhbhal Éigipte.
wherein it destroyed Mothla son of Méilg the great high king of Egypt.

23. Nochar lugha in cath eile. tugadh leat fa mor sgeile
Nochar lugha in cath eile ; tugadh leat ; fa mór sgeile
The other battle was no less that was won by thee ; great was the consternation

(16 v.) dar gháoth dubhthach mac dáire. airdrí adhbhal easpainne
dar gáod Dubhthach mac Dáire aird-rí adhbhal Easpainne.
wherein it destroyed Dubhthach son of Dáire, the great high king of Spain.

24. Toiscc do chúaidh manannán múaidh. issin aissía lion ashlúaigh
Toiscc do chúaidh Manannán múaidh issin Aissía – lion a shlúaigh,
Noble Manannán went on a journey in Asia – numerous his host,

dar marbh fiodh abhlach fa lía. airdrí ilarmach aissia
dar mharbh Fiodhabhlach – fa lía⁴ — aird-rí iol-armach Aissia.
whereupon he slew Fiodhabhlach – who was a pillar — the multiple-armed high king of Asia.

25. Ag sin cuid mhanannain mhúaidh. dot deacraibh thear is thúaidh
Ag sin cuid Mhanannáin mhúaidh dot deacraibh thear is thúaidh,
That was the share of noble Manannan of thy exertions to south and north,

no go ttug fadeagdos dil. agcleamnus do rígh sigir
no go ttug it – fa deagh-dos dil — i gcleamhnus do rígh Sigir.
until he gave it – good protection was dear — in a wedding to the king of Sigear.

26. Do cum cairbre dúan mholta. do cinn in sgíeath sgíeamhcorcra
Do chum Cairbre dúan mholta do cinn in sgíath sgíamh-corcra ;
Cairbre composed a praise-poem for the lovely purple shield ;
fear go millsí is go náoiibh sin. do rígh innsi sáoir sigir

² Murphy (*DF* III, p. 35) emends to *rian* to restore the usual internal rhyme with *sgíath*.

³ A preterite from *gáetid* (vn. attested later as *gaedad*, and *gaed*), a modernism formed from generalisation of the past passive stem of *gonaid* (vn. *guin*). Prof. Murphy delenited to *-t* to read as an active preterite. If the *-th* is for *-dh* in older orthography, an impersonal could be read.

⁴ Noted as 'obscure and possibly corrupt by Prof. Murphy, *DF* III, p. 35, although it is a fairly obvious metaphor for a warrior.

fear go milsi is go n-áuibh sin do rígh innsi sáoir-Shigir.
that was a graceful, cheerful man to the King of the Isle of sovereign Sigear.

27. Cáoga uinge don ór dhron. tug gola dhó ar amholadh
Cáoga uinge den ór dhron tug Gola dhó ar a mholadh ;
Fifty ounces of pure gold Gola gave him for its praise ;

feirde afhíach is moide abhladh. ar áon issin sgíeath sgíeamhglan
feirde a fhiach is moide a bhladh ar áon issin sgíath sgíamh-glan.
better was his honour-price and larger his fame, together with the shining-bright shield.

28. Bronnais cairbre in flaith fíol. mac éadáine fa maith mádh
Bronnais Cairbre in flaith fíal mac Éadáine – fa maith mádh –
Cairbre the generous prince bestowed, son of Eadain – he was well-esteemed –

don tríath calma ar nár lui chuir brón. in sgíeath don dághdha dreachmór
don tríath calma ar nár chuir brón⁵ in sgíath don Daghdha dreach-mhór.
to the valiant lord whom it gave no grief, the shield to the great-countenanced Daghdha.

29. Tug in dághdha deitheór ard. in sgíeath dathchorcra doinndearg
Tug in Daghdha d'Eitheor ard in sgíath dath-chorcra doinn-dearg
The Daghdha gave tall Eitheor the purple-hued, russet-brown shield

don tslait go méad nglonn re gléo. do mac cuinn mic cearmotó
don tslait go méad nglonn re gléo, do mac Cuinn mic Cearmodó.⁶
to the scion with a quantity of the exploits of the fight, to the son of Conn son of Cearmad.

30. On sgéith sin tugadh mac cuill. ar eatoir go ndreich mín dhúin
Ón sgéith sin tugadh mac Cuill ar Eitheor go ndreich mín dhúin,
From that shield [the name] mac Cuill was given to to noble Eitheor of swarthy countenance,

fear na nglonn nach ar clé bladh. óir isé coll da gcreideadh
fear na nglonn nach ar clé-blahd, óir is é coll dá gcreideadh.
a man of exploits who was not ill-famed, for it was the hazel in which he used to trust.

31. An lá do marbhadh mac cuill. agcath tailltean ba mór muirn
In lá do marbhadh mac Cuill i gcath Tailltean – ba mór muirn ;
On the day mac Cuill was slain in the battle of Taillte – great was the clamour ;

fear nár beag trom ár a muigh. tarraidh sgorán in sgíeathsain
fear nár beag trom-ár i muigh ; tarraidh Sgorán in sgíath-sain.
he was a man whose heavy slaughter was not little afield ; Sgorán obtained the shield.

32. Ré ré da chéad mblíadhain mbíl. don sgéith ordhaidhe ársaidh
Ré ré dá chéad mblíadhain mbil don sgéith órdhaidhe ársaidh ;
For an interval of two hundred good years for the splendid antique shield ;

⁵ *lui* may be the remnant of the verb *luigh*, half surviving a change to the line, or just a scribal slip into a familiar phrase left uncorrected as he caught himself. A reading closer to the idea of 'upon whom sorrows never lay' would certainly be possible.

⁶ A pseudoarchaic genitive, but required by rhyme.

a haithle sáoghail bus sía. do bhí ag ríoghaibh ffear menía
 a haithle, sáoghail ba sía do bhí ag ríoghaibh fFear Menía.^a
 afterwards, a period that was longer, the kings of Fear Menians had it.

33. Do luidh manannán na níadh. na díaigh attír ffear menía
 Do luidh Manannán na níadh 'na díaigh i tír fFear Menía
 Manannán of the warrior-bands went after it into the land of Fear Menians

gur bhris naoí gcatha go mbloídh. ar muinntear sgoráin sgíeath gloin
 gur bhris naoí gcatha go mbloídh ar muinntear Sgoráin sgíath-ghloin.
 so that he won nine renowned battles over the people of Sgorán bright-shield.

34. Ro mharbh trí catha calma. don tslúagh aluinn allmurdha
 Ro mharbh trí catha calma den tslúagh áluinn allmurdha ;
 He slew three valiant battalions of the splendid barbarian host ;

bá hé in sgél adhbhal gan tár. fa ndearnad adhbhar ochán
 ba hé in sgéal adhbhal gan tár, fa ndearnadh adhbhar ochán:
 it was an immense tale without disgrace, for which it was made a cause of woe:

35. Cáoga uinge don ór dearg. cáoga each dualach doinndearg
 Cáoga uinge den ór dearg cáoga each dualach doinn-dhearg,
 Fifty ounces of red gold, fifty horses, red-brown tressed,

clár nochar criteall na thoigh. is fithchioll sgoráin sgíeath gloin
 clár nochar criteall⁷ 'na thoigh is fithchioll Sgoráin sgíath-ghloin.
 a board that was not shaky in his house, and the chessmen of Sgorán bright-shield.

36. Do rad dó cuma bádh mó. do manannán nír bhó ró
 Do-rad dó cumha badh mó — do Manannán — nír bhó ró,
 He gave him a settlement that was greater — to Manannán — it was not excessive,

ré cur ghliaidh mun cháogait cath. trí cháoga sgíeath fan sgéith sin
 ré cur ghliaidh' mun cháogait cath : trí cháoga sgíath fan sgéith sin.⁸
 for putting a fight to the fifty battalions : three fifties of shields before that shield.

37. Do bhí si ag manannán féin. in sgíeath ildhealmhach aigmhéil
 Do bhí-si ag Manannán féin in sgíath il-dhealbhach aigbhéil,
 Manannán himself had the vari-formed, awesome shield,

gun ffior láinghlic gan gníomh lag. go tainic tadhg mac núadhat
 'gun ffior láin-ghlic gan gníomh lag go táinic Tadhg mac Núadhat.
 the truly wise man without a feeble deed had it until Tadhg son of Nuadha came.

38. Do rad manannán do tadhg. in sgíeath dathchorcra doinndearg
 Do-rad Manannán do Thadhg in sgíath dath-chorcra doinn-dearg,
 Manannán gave to Tadhg the purple-hued, russet-brown shield,

do mac núadhat in sáor seang. maráon & in fhithchioll
 do mac Núadhat in sáor seang, maráon agus in fhithchioll.
 to the son of Nuadha, the slender craftsman, together with even the chessmen

⁷ *Hapax legomenon*, the exact meaning remains vague.

⁸ This couplet does not rhyme at all ; one must suspect corruption.

39. An laithe rug cumhall cain. muirn mhoncaom leis ar éigin
 In laithe rug Cumhall cain Muirn mhuin-chaomh leis ar éigin,
 On the day that gentle Cumhall took Muirn the fair-necked with him perforce,

(17 v.) tríath gacha hálóid fearrdha. tarroidh in sgíath sgainneardha
 tríath gacha hálóidh fearrdha tarroidh in sgíath sgainneartha.
 [that] lord of every manly virtue obtained the shield of portents.

40. In tan ró thuit cumhall cain. acnucha os liffe laighean
 In tan ro thuit Cumhall cain i cCnucha ós Life Laighean
 When gentle Cumhall fell in Cnucha over Life of Laighean

an flaith mínmall nar beag blad. tarroidh criomall in sgíath sin
 in flaith mínmall – nár beag blad – tarroidh criomhall in sgíath sin.
 the prince – the fame was not small – Criomhall obtained that shield.

41. Mar do urmais fionn fearrdha. ar criomall cháomh chathardha
 Mar do urmhais Fionn fearrdha ar Criomhall cháomh chathardha,
 When manly Fionn encountered dear, civil Criomhall,

glac glemhór dar diall gac gliáidh. tug ó tréanmhór in trensgíath
 glac glé-mhór dár dhiall gach gliáidh, tug ó thréanmhór in tréin-sgíath.
 a very great grasp whereto every fight yielded, he took from a strong man the strong shield.

42. A ttugadh do cathaibh leat. ag mac cumaill na ngeal nglac
 A ttugadh do cathaibh leat ag mac Cumhaill na ngeal nglac,
 All of the battles that have been won by thee that Mac Cumhall of the white hands had,

a sgíath roighil nar cáineadh. ba doiligh agcomhaireamh
 a sgíath ró ghil nár cáineadh, ba doiligh i gcomhaireamh.
 O shield most white that has not been abused, they were difficult to count.

43. Leat do radadh cath chinnchluig. dár marbhadh dubhthach mac duibh
 Leat do-radadh cath Chinn Chluigh, dár marbhadh Dubhthach mac Duibh ;
 By thee the battle of Ceann Chluigh was given, wherein Dubhthach son of Dubh was slain ;

cath mona maffaidh gan léan. dar marbhadh deidgeal duirbhél
 cath Móna Mhafaigh gan léan, dár marbhadh Déidgeal dúir-bhéal.
 the battle of Móin Mhafaigh without grief, wherein Déidgeal stiff-lip was slain.

44. Cath lúachra cath cinn aisi. is cath inbeir dubhglaisi
 Cath Lúachra, cath Cinn Aisi, is cath Inbhir Dubh-ghlaisi,
 The battle of Luachair, the battle of Ceann Aisi, and the battle of Inbhear Dubh-ghlas,

cath teafa teann amheisge. cath chlúana meann muirisge
 cath Teafa – teann a mheisge, cath Chlúana Meann Muirisge.
 the battle of Teafa – decisive its raging, the battle of Cluain Meann Muirisge.

45. Cath lusga cath chinnchláire. & cath dhúnaidh máighe
 Cath Lusga, cath Chinn Chláire, agus cath Dhúnaidh Máighe,
 The battle of Luasg, the battle of Ceann Cláire, and the battle of Dún Máighe,

cath tsléiphe fúaid fa teann teas. rúaid dar tuit garban garbhghlas
 cath tSléibhe Fúaid – fa teann teas, rúaid dár thuit Garbán garbh-ghlas.
 the battle of Sliabh Fuaid – its zeal was decisive, an incursion wherein grey-eyed Garbán fell.

46. Cath fionntrágha óna buidheach badhbh. dar fagbadh fuil & fadhb
 Cath Fionntrágha ón buidheach badhbh, dár fagbadh fuil agus fadhb
 The battle of Fionntraigh, whereby the crows were pleased, wherein blood and spolia were left.

da cath cródha um áth mona. maráon is cath cronnmhóna
 dá cath cródha um Áth Móna maráon is cath Cronn-mhóna.
 two fierce battles around Áth Móna together with the battle of Cronn-mhóin.

47. Cathbolccraighe ba mór gluinn. inar thuit cormac cruind
 Cath Bolgraighe – ba mór gluinn, inar thuit Cormac cruind,
 The battle of Bolgraighe – great were the exploits, in which perfect Cormac fell,

cath achoidh abhla nár ghann. cath gáphra cath na bpunnand
 cath Achaidh Abhla – nár ghann, cath Gábhra, cath na bpunnand.
 the battle of Achadh Abhla – it was not limited, the battle of Gábhair, the battle of the sheaves.

48. Cath ollairbha ba garp gliáidh. inar marbhadh fathadh fíal
 Cath Ollairbha – ba garbh gliadh, inar marbhadh fathadh fíal,
 The battle of Ollarbh – it was a fierce fight, in which noble Fathadh was slain.

catheisi ba mór aghluinn. & cath chéisi coruind
 cath Eisi – ba mór a ghluinn, agus cath Chéisi Coruind.
 The battle of Eisi – great were its exploits, and the battle of Céis Coruind.

49. Cath cairrge cat srúibhe brain. & cath bheinne headóir
 Cath Cairrge, Cath Srúibhe Brain, agus Cath Bhéinne hÉadoir,
 The battle of Carraig, the battle of Bran's snout, and the battle of Beann Éadoir.

cath sleibhe uighe nár ghann. & cath mhoighe mháland
 cath Sléibhe Uighe – nár ghann, agus cath Mhoighe Mhaland.
 The battle of Sliabh Uighe – it was not limited, and the battle of Magh Maland.

50. Cath na colamnach ccalma. & cath inbhir bádhná
 Cath na cColamhnach ccalma, agus cath Inbhir Bádhná,
 The battle of the valiant Colamhnaigh,^b and the battle of Inbhear Bádhná,

cath ata modhuirn léir linn. & cat beirge as bóainn
 cath Átha Modhuirn – léir linn, is cath Beirge os Bóáinn.
 the battle of Áth Modhuirn – indubitable to us, and the battle of Beirge-ós-Bóinn.

51. Cath moighe hadhair gan tár. & cath dhuine fráochán
 Cath Moighe hAdhair – gan tár, agus cath Dhúine Fráochán,
 The battle of Magh Adhair – without disgrace, and the battle of Dún Fraochán,

cath meilge ba hadhbhal ágh.⁹ fo andearnadh éighmhe is uchán
 cath Méilge – ba hadhbhal ágh fá ndearnadh éighmhe 's uchán.
 the battle of Meilge – great was the slaughter, concerning which screams and woe were made.

52. Cath Beirbhe ba mór aghlonn. iar gcath rí lochlann na long
 Cath Beirbhe – ba mór a ghlonn, iar gcath rí Lochlann na long,
 The battle of Beirbhe – great were its exploits, after the battle of the King of Lochlann of the ships,

⁹ The scribe has written *gan tár* again, then squeezed the correct reading of *ágh* in between the lines.

cath uighe ba cinnte in sgél. & cath innse gaibiél
 cath Uighe – ba cinnte in sgél, agus cath Inse Gaibiél.
 the battle of Uigh – certain was the tale, and the battle of Inis Gaibiél.

53. Cath monadh cath cinn tíre. & cath ághmar íle
 Cath Monadh, cath Cinn Tíre, agus cath ághmar íle,
 The battle of Moin, the battle of Ceann Tíre, and the brave battle of íle,

cath saxan ba mór abhlaidh. cath dhúine binne bríghmair
 cath Saxan – ba mór a bhlaidh, cath Dhúine Binne bríghmair.¹⁰
 the battle of the Saxons – great were its glories, the battle of powerful Dún Binne.

54. Cath inar marbhadh aicil ard. airdrígh deaglámhac danmarg
 Cath inar marbhadh Aicil árd áird-rígh deagh-lámhach Danmarg,
 The battle wherein tall Aicil was slain, the good-handed High-King of Denmark

(18 r.) cath inbhir buille ní bréag. & cath buinne boirbthréin
 cath Inbhir Buille – ní bréag, agus cath Buinne boirb-thréin.¹¹
 the battle of Inbhear Buille – it is no lie, and the fiercely-strong battle of Buinn.

55. Fiche cath is da cath déag. alla moigh deirinn is ní bréag
 Fiche cath is dá cath déag allamoigh d'Éirinn – is ní bréag –
 A score of battles and twelve battles also overseas from Erin – and it is no lie –

go tír na ndionn nar bheag bladh. do rat fionn leat do chathaibh
 go Tír na nDionn, nár bheag bladh, do-rat Fionn leat do chathaibh.¹²
 to Tír na nDionn – not small was its fame, Fionn fought with thee some battles.

56. Ocht ccath aláighnibh na lann. tugus is do triath táoibhseang
 Ocht ccath i Laighnibh na lann tugais is do thriath táoibh-seang
 Eight battles in Laighean of the blades thou and thy slender-sided lord took

feadh do ratha ní bréag soin. sé catha déag anulltoiph
 feadh do rátha – ní bréag soin : sé catha déag i nUlaibh.
 the extent of thy successes – it is no lie : sixteen battles in Uladh.

57. X ccatha fichead gan on. tugais amhumhain mhic con
 Deich ccatha fichead gan on tugais i Mhumhain mhic Con ;
 Ten and a score battles without reproach thou gavest in Mumhu of Mac Con ;

¹⁰ Murphy, unhappy with what is simply a rather loose rhyme, suggests emending *bhladh*: *bríghmhar* and reconstruing the latter with *cath* (*DF* III, p. 35, n. 53c).

¹¹ Emendation by Meyer, from Murphy, *DF* III, p. 35, n. 54, restores good rhyme.

¹² The rhyme is poor. One may emend to *blaidh* with Murphy, but it is to be noted, as Murphy worries, that such a form either as nom. singular or gen. are forbidden by *IGT* § 40 and § 95 (it appears twice). *DIL* contains neither of these forms. Gen. *blaidhe* appears in §40, but it is impossible to read such a form as a monosyllable. It is better to note that there has been corruption than to propose an emendation that is also faulty.

noc abreag acht is cearta. is da cath dheag acconnsusa
 noch a bréag acht is cearta, is dá cath dhéag i cConnachta.¹³
 it was no lie, but it is true, and twelve battles in Connacht.

58. Cóicc catha fichead go mbúaidh. tugadh leat achomhla chrúaidh
 Cóicc catha fichead go mbúaidh tugadh leat, a chómhla chrúaidh,
 Five powerful battles and a score were given by thee, O hard door,

ocht ccatha deag rúaig nár ghann. úait ar thuathaibh dé dhanann
 ocht ccatha deag, rúaig nár ghann, úait ar Thuathaibh Dé Dhanann.
 eighteen battles, an incursion that was not limited, by thee over the Tuatha Dé Danann.

59. A fféagmhuis do bruighean mborb. sdo coinns gléo fa crúaidh colg
 A fféagmhuis do bruighean mborb 's do coinns gléo fa crúaidh colg,
 What is lacking of bitter quarrels and of conflicts under tough blade,

ag sin réd rathoibh go teann. do chuid do cathaibh eireann
 ag sin réd rathoibh go teann do chuid de chathaibh Éireann.
 in those things were powerfully in thy successes, for thy portion of the battles of Erin.

60. Brisde mo chroidhe os mo corp. ro ceiseas mor deag comnart
 Brisde mo chroidhe ós mo corp, ro cheiseas mór d'éag comhnart
 Broken is my heart in my body, greatly I have mourned thy utter destruction

tu gan cosnamh ar in moigh. arnad losgadh don mucaidh
 tú gan cosnamh ar in moigh arnad losgadh don mhucaidh
 thou without defence on the plain, thy having been burnt by the swineherd.

61. Trí nonbhair sinne ar druim deilcc. a haithle in catha cróideirg
 Trí nonbhair sinne ar Druim Deilcc a haithle in catha cróí-deirg ;
 Three ninesomes were we on Drum Deilg after the blood-red battle ;

ba trúaigh ar ndáilne ré arádh. tucsam trí gáire uchán
 ba trúaigh ar ndáil-ne ré a rádh ; tucsam trí gáire, uchán.
 tough were our circumstances to tell ; we gave three cries of woe.¹⁴

62. O chrann na haithne boí abparrrthus fo ndearnad fo rior iomarbhús
 Ó chrann na haithne boí i bPárrthus fo ndearnadh, fo ríor, iomarbhús,
 Since the tree of knowledge that was in Paradise whereby was done, alas, transgression,

nochar dearbhadh crann ar lár. is mó fa ndearnadh ochán
 nochar dearbhadh crann ar lár is mó fa ndearnadh ochán.
 there was not created a tree on the ground whereby greater woe was made.

63. Go rum sáora rí neimhe. mac maith muire ingheane
 Go rom sáora Rí Neimhe Mac maith Muire inghine
 The King of Heaven save me, Son of the Virgin Mary

¹³ The rhyme relies on two improbabilities: *ceart* is an o-stem as a noun in § 63, pl. c(e)irt ; as an adj., it is unlikely to take a feminine pl. ending that matches nothing. Furthermore, *i cConachta* is a misuse of case not paralleled in this lay. As line *c* is a cheville, it is probably a scribal patch and *cContachtaibh* changed to rhyme.

¹⁴ The word 'woe' here and in the following quatrains is the same word as the interjection translated 'Alas' at the start, but used as a noun ; it here serves for a series of three *dúnaidh*.

ar iffreann go ngeire ngádh. fa ndearnadh éighme is uchán
 ar iffreann go ngéire ngádh fa ndearnadh éighme is uchán.
 from Hell so sharply perilous whereby has been made weeping and woe.

===VCHAN===

Notes

^a*Fir Menia* is suggested in Mac Neill's translation and Murphy's glossary as a corruption of Armenia. The present author has doubts, which are explained in the *Index Locorum*.

^b*Colamhnaigh* : Vid. note in the *Index Locorum*.

Language

The following forms are worthy of note

3a *nocha*, disyllabic negative particle

5a *ceárd-ghobha*, *gobha* is an older form : OG *goba*, but usually Modern *gobhann*, derived from the original genitive, has largely replaced the nominative.

8d *do-fhidir*, preservation of the deponent verb *ro-fitir* in the positive

9b *adeirim*, a form according to modern usage, perhaps a scribal replacement of an older, metrically identical form from *as-beirim*

14d *'na adhbha bádhbh*, the primitive form of the *tá... ina* construction, cf. Murphy, *DF* III p. cxi and Ó Maille, pp. 89-90, 93.

22a *nochar*, disyllabic copula

22c, 23c *gaoth* (*recte*, *gaod* or *gaodh*?) is a rare form from *gonaid* unattested in the Early Modern period ; vid. n. 3 supra.

27c *feirde*, comparative preserved

32b *órdhaidhe ársaidh*, these adj. are unknown in the Classical period. The citations for them in *DIL* are from the earlier recension of the *Agallamh*.

36a *do-rad*, a good older perf. from *do-bheir*

36b *nír bhó*, an older disyllabic copula

38a *do-rad*, a good older perf. from *do-bheir*

39c *áloidh* a MG word

39d, 40d *tarroidh*, a later form than is found elsewhere in these lays

43a *do-radadh*, a good older perf. from *do-bheir*

50d *Bóäinn*, scans as a disyllabic form

51d *a ndearnadh*, *éighmhe*, *is uchán*, *dearnadh* is found in no lexicon ; *éighmhe* evidently from (OG) *éigmech* or *éigmed*, both 'screaming', but a proper form of neither variant

55d *do-rat*, as above

57c *nocha*, disyllabic copula form

60b *comhnart*, a word suggestive of MG

63a *rom sáora*, infixed pronoun on a good *a*-subjunctive

Professor Murphy noted (*DF* III, p. 34) the following early words: *aba* 12a, *bil* 14a, 32a, *gáot* (sic in Murphy) 22c, 23c, *sgeile* 23b, *áloid* 39d (meaning uncertain to Murphy, see 39d note above), *allamoigh* 55b, *coinnsgeó* 59 ; *DIL* (s. v.) confirms that these are indeed early. Murphy notes the old preterite *luidh* from *téit*, 15a, 33a. No analytic verbs are used. He did not remark on the verbal survivals noted above, although none are notably early. The poem is unquestionably Middle Gaelic — and better preserved than many in the MS. Again, it may be said that the date in the twelfth century that Murphy assigned the poem is likely to be

conservative ; the comparison with the language of the lay of 'Find and the Phantoms' in the Leabhar Laighneach is interesting, for the verbal system in this poem is more archaic than the remarkably modern one in 'Find and the Phantoms,' despite coming through a MS with tendencies to modernise the verbal system most of all. To put the date at 1100 or slightly afterward would require no stretching of the evidence.

IV : *Laoidh Síthil Caoilte* Incipit 'Síothal Chaíliti cia ros fuáir'

An edition of 'Síothal Chaíliti cia ros fuáir' based on Killiney MS A 20 (Duanaire Finn)

The principles of this edition are those of the general introduction. There are, nevertheless, a few complicating points because this lay exists in another recension. The text given here is based solely on A, in the same manner as for other texts from A. Emendations, if necessary, are done with a consultation of the other recension, but *all* use of it is noted in the footnotes. The notes which follow this text are based only on this recension. A comparison of the language of the two recensions will be done following the notes to SCP. The English translation has been undertaken in close consultation of the translation of the P recension, that the translations may converge insofar as the Gaelic matches. In places where the recensions employ synonyms, the author has attempted to render each with a different English word, so as to preserve in translation the difference between the recensions.

(17 v.) 1. *Síothal chaíliti cia ros fuáir. Sloinnfet sunn imbethaidh búain.*¹
[Oisín:] *Síothal^a Chaíliti – cia ros fuáir, sloinnfet sunn i mbeathaidh búain ;*
[Oisín:] *Caoilte's Dipper – who found it, I shall tell that in good time ;*

bá mór lá ro híarthasoin. gan fhuáran os dubheochair²
bá mór lá ro híarrthasoin gan fhuaran ós Dubh-eochair.
many were the days that it was sought in the spring above Dubh-eochair.

2. *Fosaigh in sithlín mbic mbáin. neoch do radabhúir um láimh*
Fosaigh in sithlín mbic mbáin, neoch do-radabhúir im láimh ;
Hold the bright little dipper, the thing that ye have delivered into my hand ;

fáiltigidh mo chroidhe cain. Síthil chaoilte in caratraidh
fáiltigidh mo chroidhe cáin — Síthil Chaoilte in charatraidh.
it gladdens my fair heart — Dipper of Caoilte of the friendship.

3. *Deutt is ór is gloine gorm. gidh bé do iarr afius orm*
Deutt, is ór, is gloinne gorm — gidhbé do iarr a fhios orm –
Ivory, and gold, and blue crystal — whoso sought to know it from me –

fionndruine & airgiott bán. Síothal chaoilte in flathmacámh
fionndruine is airgiott bán Síothal Chaoilte in flath-macámh.
white-bronze, and bright silver is the Dipper of Caoilte, the young lord.

4. *Uhall deargoir ara lar. go núathneadhóibh dairgead bhán*
Uhall dearg-óir ar a lár go n-úathneadhóibh d'airgead bhán :
An 'apple' of red-gold in its centre, with pillars of white silver :

da leith clí do cuirrthi sin. ba lais uisce on Síthil
dá leith clí do cuirrthi sin, ba lais uisce ó'n Síthil.
if that were put onto to its right side, thereby would be water from the Dipper.

5. *Mar do cuireadh da leith deis. in tubhall cuanna coimhdheis*
Mar do cuireadh dá leith deis, in t-ubhall cuanna coimh-dheis,
As onto its left side was put the noble, well-formed apple,

¹ The large letters of the opening line did not permit its completion. *Búain* is thus written in the following line.

² The form of the place name agrees with that in the prose introduction to P, but not with LMPR.

(18 r.) fosdadh in tubhall beag bán. sa nuisce go mbíodh lomlán
 fosdadh in t-ubhall beag bán a n-uisce,³ go mbíodh lom-lán
 the little white apple would hold the water, so that it would be full indeed.

6. Uisce do chuir for alár. adeirim is dearbh in dál
 Uisce do chuir for a lár, adeirim, is dearbh in dál :
 Water went over the middle, I say, and true the pouring :

a rogha díghe iar sin. do bheireadh da gach rígh feindidh
 a rogha díghe iar sin do-bheireadh dá gach rígh-fhéinnidh.
 that which was his choice of drink, after that, was given to each Fian king.

7. Ionmhuin nech díá ndailti soin. Sítheal caoilte in lúathlamaigh
 Ionmhuin neach díá ndáilti soin Sítheal Chaóilte in lúath-lamhaigh ;
 Dear was he by whom those pourings out the dipper of Caoilte of swift hurling ;

nochar daileastair dígh ríamh. ba ferr cruth & caoimchíall
 nochar daileastair dígh ríamh ba fearr cruth agus caoim-chíall.
 it never served a drink ever that was better in appearance and sense-delighting.

8. Mo teisd ar ua Rónáin Reidh. sech gach fear do bhí sa fféin
 Mo theisd ar ua Rónáin réidh seach gach fear do bhí sa fFéin,
 My lauds on the grandson of Rónán the steady above every man who was in the Fian,

gonach taraill talamh nó tuinn. aoín fer mar caoilte cruinn
 go nach taraill talamh nó tuinn aoín-fhear mar Caoilte cruinn.
 so there came not on land or sea one man like perfect Caoilte.

9. Ba hóglaigh ba giolla gnáth. ba brughaid do congmad cách
 Ba hóglaigh, ba giolla gnáth ; ba brughaid do chongmhadh cách
 A famous lad, a famous warrior was he ; he was a hosteller who used to serve all.

ba trein fer do briseadh cath. ba fear fosaigh fíor uallach
 ba trein-fhear do bhriseadh cath ; ba fear fosaigh fíor-uallach.
 he was a champion for winning battles ; he was he was a quiet man of true boasts.

10. Diamadh ór cruinn is clacha. sa mbeath ar breith na flatha
 Diamadh ór cruinn is clacha 's a mbeath' ar breith na flatha,
 If sticks and stones were gold, and their ownership [was] by judgement of the prince,

ba hé glór adearadh ris. is do cách uile dfoigheindis
 ba hé glór adearadh ris : is do cách uile d'fhoigheindís.
 this is the boast that would be made by him : they would serve everyone.

11. Iadfadsa lé mo croidhe truagh. in síthil áloinn fhionn fhúar
 Iadfad-sa le mo chroidhe trúagh in Síthil áloinn fhionn-fhúar ;
 I shall hold to my hard heart the lovely, cool, white Dipper ;

uch nach é caoilte in chara. tárla sunn mur ad rala
 uch nach é Caoilte in chara tárla sunn mur ad-rala.
 alas that it is not Caoilte, the friend who happened to be here as it happened.

³ Murphy (*DF* III, p. 37), is unhappy with the reading, and removes the s, giving an accusative. 6d in the P recension agrees with Murphy, but the verb there is *leigeadh*, and the line means the opposite. It appears that the 'apple' is a large nugget at the head of a pin holding a base, as the one on the Ardagh chalice, rather than some ingenious stopping device. The presence of a late form, *lom-lán*, suggests that the line has seen modernisation.

12. Airis agam ar dhíá ndil. atháilghinn athairrngtaigh
 Airis agam, ar Dhíá ndil, a Tháilghinn, a thairringtaigh,⁴
 Halt thou with me, by the dear Lord, O Adzehead, prophesied one,

go ninnisear dhuit remlá. sgéla deimhne na sithla
 go n-innisear dhuit rem lá sgéla deimhne na Síothla.
 that I may tell thee in my time, the true tale of the Dipper.

13. Lá díá mbámar ós eas Rúaidh. fíeana finn uile ineanuair
 Lá díá mbámar ós Eas Rúaidh, Fíana Finn uile i n-éan-úair ;
 One day we were above Eas Ruaidh, the Fian of Fionn, all together then

roinnius fionn ba feirde dhe. foithri feadha farraige
 ro innius Fionn – ba feirde dhe — foithri feadha farraige ;
 Fionn enumerated – it was better for him — woodland, wilderness, plains.

14. Fionnchadh corr coslúath gan acht. rucsat seilg criche Connacht
 Fionnchadh, Corr, Coslúath gan acht : rucsat seilg criche Connacht ;
 Fionnchadh, Corr, Cosluath without fault : they took the hunt of the land of Connacht ;

& súanán mac fir⁵ thruim. fáolán lughaidh olíeathdruim
 Ocus Súanán mac Fir Thruim, Fáolán, Lughaidh ó Líathdruim.
 and Suanan son of Fear Thruim, Faolan, Lughaidh from Liathdruim.

15. Trí rígh fían mbreatan co rath. ánluan forann fearadhach
 Trí rígh Fían mBreatan co rath, Ánluan, Forann, Fearadhach :
 Three kings of the Fiana of prosperous Britain Anluan, Forann, Fearadhach :

ionmhuin buidhean béoda angniom. trí meic iobhair anairdríogh
 ionmhuin buidhean – béoda a ngníomh — trí meic Iobhair in áird-ríogh.
 a dear troop – great their deeds — three sons of Iobhar the High King.

16. Glasannroidh is giollannraidh ghnáth. leanus forann uainn seach cách
 Glasannroidh is Giollannraidh ghnáth, leanus Forann úainn – seach cách,
 Glasannroidh and Giollannraidh the trustworthy, follow Forann from us, moreover,

rug mac Rí breatan go ngus. trían ar ndeoraidh s ar namhus
 rug mac Rí Breatan go ngus trían ar ndeoraidh 's ar n-amhus.
 the son of the King of Britain took a third of our foreigners and our mercenaries.

17. In tan ad conairc sin fionn. sol do labhrus labhraidh liom
 In tan ad-conairc sin Fionn, sol do labhrus, labhraidh liom :
 When Fionn saw that, before I spake, he speaks to me :

beir leat a oisín immale. cnú deireóil & daighre
 'beir leat, a Oisín, 'mmale Cnú Dheireóil agus Daighre.
 'take with thee, O Oisín, as accompaniment, Cnú Dheireoil and Daighre.

⁴ Mac Neill emended *a tharrng(ear)taigh*, and Murphy neither repeats nor comments upon the emendation, although it would make an acceptable line faulty.

⁵ The scribe has written *chuirb* after *fir*, then deleted the word with *puncta delenta*. *Mac Fir Chruinn* is the reading of the other recension ; the case appears to be that both recensions have innovated from a problematic name.

18. Deana seilg laighean na lann. osraighe & sleibhe cúalann
 'Déana seilg Laighean na lann, Osraighe, 's Sléibhe Cúalann ;
 'Do thou the hunt of Laighean of the blades, Osraighe, and Sliabh Cualann ;

beir clann cúain ar áon ris. beir moirfidigh beir mhamhais
 beir Clann Cúain ar áon ris ; beir m'oirfidigh ; beir mh'amhuis.
 take the sons of Cuan along with thee ; take my musicians ; take my mercenaries.

19. IS tú is fearr eineach uainn. a oissin gus in sáor bhúaidh
 Is tú is fearr eineach úainn a Oisín gus in sáor-bhúaidh ;
 Thou art most reputable among us, O Oisín, to true excellence ;

IS riot is cuibhdhe ar aoí sin. deoraidh ammais ar ionchaibh
 is riot is cuibhdhe ar aoí sin deoraidh, amhais, ar ionchaibh.'
 it is most fitting that to thee, because of that, aliens, mercenaries [go] for protection.'

20. A oirfidigh féin gan mheirg. rug leis forann ar in seilg
 A h-oirfidigh féin gan mheirg rug leis Forann ar in sheilg :
 His own musicians without fault Forann took with him on the hunt :

(18 v.) súanach seanach breasal bán. uallach Aícheair ailgeanán
 Súanach, Seanach, Breasal Bán, Uallach, Aoicheair, Ailgeanán.
 Suanach, Seanach, Breasal Bán, Uallach, Aoicheair, Ailgeanán.

21. Cobhtach cíoithrúaidh & cass. maine & eanna amhnus
 Cobhthach, Cioithrúaidh is Cas, Maine, is Éanna amhnus,
 Cobhthach, Cioithruaidh, and Cas, Maine, and fierce Éanna,

cronán crinne caoín in modh. ceolach faoídh & fosgadh
 Cronán, Crinne, Caoín in modh, Ceolach, Faoídh, agus Fosgadh.
 Cronán, Crinne, Caoín the honourable, Ceolach, Faoídh, and Fosgadh.

22. Ró gabhsam tnúth riss ann sin. ré mac Rígh breatan bríghmair
 Ro ghabhsam tnúth ris ann sin, ré mac Rígh Breatan bríoghmhair ;
 We got envious of him then, of the son of the powerful King of Britain ;

ba headh leinn gach arug leis. deóraigh oirfidigh amhais
 ba headh leinn gach a rug leis : deóraigh, oirfidigh, amhais.
 everything that he took had been ours : aliens, musicians, mercenaries.

23. IAR sin suidhis ag bearnuis. fionn da ttugsamh tighearnus
 Iar sin suidhis ag Bearnuis Fionn dá ttugsamh tighearnus ;
 Thereafter, he sat at Bearnas : Fionn, to whom we gave lordship ;

sgáoilis úaidh lucht na sealga. conda gconaibh croibhdhearga
 sgáoilis úaidh lucht na sealga conda cconaibh croibh-dhearga.
 he sent from him his huntsmen with their red-pawed hounds.

24. Ochtar afforradh in rígh. in neoch nach ffuilingthe angníomh
 Ochtar i fforradh in ríogh in neoch nach ffuilingthe a ngníomh ;
 An octet in accompaniment of the king, those whose deeds were not endured;

ba hé féin in náomhadh. fear fionn mac cumhaill na ccorrsleagh
 ba hé féin in náomhadh fear Fionn mac Cumhaill na ccorr-sleagh.
 He himself was the ninth man, Fionn mac Cumhaill of the round spears.

25. Cúan is áodh beag mac finn. failbe & rinnolbh go rinn⁶
 Cúan, is Áodh beag mac Finn, Failbhe, is Riondolbh go rinn
 Cuan, and little Aodh son of Fionn, Failbhe, and Riondolbh the keen

glass mac eadair garg aghus. caoínche daire & donngus
 Glass mac Eadair – garg a ghus, Caoínche, Dáire is Donngus.
 Glass son of Eadar – cruel his ardour, Caoinche, Dáire, and Donngus.

26. Cú ar eill gach fir dibh sin. fionn is bran ar abhéloibh
 Cú ar éill gach fir díbh sin : Fionn is Bran ar a bhéloibh –
 A hound on the leash of each of those men : Fionn and Bran before him –

eistigh. riomsa ier mo thá. go ninnisear anamana
 éistigh riom-sa, iar mo thá go n-innisear a n-anama.
 hearken to me, so after my recollection, I may tell their names.

27. Fuilteach ag áodh beag mac finn. eachtach ag rinnolbh go rinn
 Fuilteach ag Áodh beag mac Finn ; Éachtach ag Riondolbh go rinn.
 Little Aodh son of Finn had Fuilteach ; Riondolbh the keen had Éachtach.

Fear glinne ag failbe malle. is gáoth agcúan cruimglinne
 Fear Glinne ag Failbhe 'maille, is Gáoth ag Cúan Cruim-ghlinne.
 Failbe had Fear Glinne accompanying him, and Cuan Cruim-ghlinne had Gaoth.

28. Eitioll ag glas garbh. ag ráin. fiámhach cú caoínche comlán
 Eitioll ag Glas, Garbh ag Ráin ; Fiámhach cú Caoínche comhláin ;
 Glas had Eitioll ; Rain had Garbh ; perfect Caoinche had Fiamhach ;

fearglonn ag dáire ré lá. fear báoth alaimh donngusa
 Fearghlonn ag Dáire ré lá ; Fear Báoth i láimh Donnghusa.
 Dáire had Fearghlonn that day ; Fear Baoth was in the hand of Donngus.

29. bran ger uó⁷ nír bhó cú. maith aghais* & cáomh achlú
 Bran ger bhó, nír bhó cú. maith a ghais 's cáomh a chlú
 Bran, though he was, was not a hound great his nobility, glorious his valour.

nír buá con nír chin óchoin. snír úa mílchon amhathar
 níorbh úa con ; níor chin ó choin, 's níor úa míl-chon a mhathar.
 he was not the descendant of hounds ; he was not from dog-kind, and his mother was no
 descendant of hunting-hounds.

30. Ní deachaidh ar choin ríeamh. ba maith aconn is acíall
 Ní dheachaidh ar choin ríamh — ba maith a conn is a cíall –
 He never went on a dog ever — good were his wits and his reason –

⁶ The scribe has repeated Áodh beag mac Finn, and scratched it out with forceful horizontal strokes. The line is continued before the next couplet on the next line.

⁷ An odd spelling. cf. the confused 33a in P. The confusion as to this line is certainly ancient, predating the development of the present recensions.

* *Cú*, after a time in flux between grammatical genders, stabilised in the modern period as a feminine. There is the tension here between the grammatical gender of the noun and Bran's physical gender. P and LMR have a consistent modern feminine. A is inconsistent. Some of the masculines may be due to the older gender of the noun, but they are also potentially explained by treating *Bran* as the antecedent rather than *cú* by anacoluthon. As there is justification for both forms, both the geminating and the leniting particles are preserved as written in the Gaelic. In English, the distinction is not translated here, as 'hound' is a grammatically masculine noun that agrees with the masculine name *Bran*.

nír chóir arádh ré aré. frí mac Rígh dhál naráide
 níor chóir a rádh ré a ré fri mac Rígh Dhál nAráidhe.
 it was improper to say in his time to the son of the King of Dál nAráidhe.

31. Átáid in ar ndiáigh. ar in nard. in flaithfhéindidh fáobhar garg
 Atáid in ar ndiáigh ar in n-árd ; in flaith-fhéindidh fáobhar garg
 They are in our wake upon the height ; the lord of the Fiana of cruel blades

ad cí chuige in muic mhóir. núathmhar n-adheitidh nanffóil
 ad-chí chuige in muic mhóir n-úathmhar n-aidhéitigh n-an-ffhóil.
 sees [coming] towards him a great pig — dreadful, abominable, ungentle.

32. Is amhluidh tainic in torc. samhailta é ris gach n-olc
 Is amhluidh táinic in torc ; samhailta é ris gach n-olc
 It is thus that the boar came ; it was like unto every evil

nír mhó hé⁹ cnoc sléibhe ina é. sé dubhgorm dubh dhóite
 níor mhó cnoc sléibhe ina é, sé dubh-ghorm dubh-dhóite.
 not greater was the height of a mountain summit than it ; it was dark-blue, charred-black.

33. Leigid in tochtar sin accoin. rissin torc bá mór in modh¹⁰
 Leigid in t-ochtar sin a ccoin rissin torc – bá mór in modh –
 That octet loose their hounds against the boar – great was the array –

iompais in torc ba gníomh crúaidh. s marbhois iad uile ineanúair
 iompáis in torc – ba gníomh crúaidh — 's marbhois iad uile in éan-úair.
 the boar turned – it was a cruel contest — and he slew them all at once.

34. Fráochaid in tochtar glan garg. déis marbhtha na ccon gceanngarg (l. *dearg*)¹¹
 Fráochaid¹² in t-ochtar glan garg d'éis marbhtha na ccon gceann dearg,
 The bright cruel octet rage after the slayings of the cruel (or red)-headed hounds,

& caithid sleigh gach fir. gus in torc núathmhair nallaidh
 ocus caithid sleigh gach fir gus in torc n-úathmhair n-allaidh.
 and every man expends a spear towards the dreadful wild boar.

35. Ró sginneadar anairm dhe. amhail badh coirrthi cloiche
 Ro sginneadar in airm dhe amhail badh coirrthi cloiche ;
 The weapons glanced off him as though it were a pillar of stone ;

(19 r.) iompais is millis uile. na hocht sleaga snas bhuidhe
 iompáis is millis uile na hocht sleaga snas-bhuidhe.
 it turned and ruined all the eight golden spears.

⁹ Marked by *puncta delenta*.

¹⁰ Murphy suggested that the bad rhyme of broad to slender was the result of corruption. The other recension's *gus in torc mhór ar in moigh* (q. 37b) is a better reading in context and in metrics which would right Murphy's complaint.

¹¹ The alternate reading is interlinear above *garg*. It is indicated with the *vel* abbreviation, and not marked as a correction. Mac Neill wrote *gceanndearg* with no explanation. The other recension reads *cceann-árd*.

¹² This verb is not attested in any lexicon, but it is obviously derived from *fráech*, 'wrath, rage'.

36. Anois úair na ngothann mór. do ní tú is bran ag anól
 [Oisín:] 'Anois úair na ngothann mór do-gní tú is Bran ag in ól ;
 [Oisín:] 'Now is the time of the great boasts that thou and Bran make at the drinking ;

do ráidhis nar taisdil magh. fiadh na torc nach dinghebhthá
 do-ráidhis nár taisdil magh fiadh ná torc nach dinghébhtha.
 thou said that there was not a journey of plains that thou wouldst not crush a deer or boar.

37. Deacair cor re draoídheacht ndéin. is meadhradh do chonn is do cheill
 Deacair cor ré draoídheacht ndéin is meadhradh do chonn is do chéill,
 It is difficult to engage with strong druidry, and thy reason and thy sense have been confused,

is dearbh liom da ccuireadh cath. is hé bran bhus uachtarach
 is dearbh liom dá ccuireadh cath, is hé Bran bhus uachtarach.'
 and I am certain to give him a battle, and it is Bran that shall be victor.'

38. Eirgis fionn is gabhus bran. & crothais in slabhradh
 Eirgis Fionn is gabhuis Bran agus crothais in slabhradh,
 Fionn arose and took Bran and shook the chain,

& sloinnis dhi re alá. a héchta sa haitheassa
 agus sloinnis dhí ré a lá a héchta 's a haitheassa.
 and told him in time his exploits and his triumphs.

39. Ba mó ina in torc úd ar fionn. in torc do marbhus sa ghlionn
 'Ba mó ina in torc úd,' ar Fionn, 'in torc do marbhuis sa ghlionn,
 'Greater than yon boar,' quoth Fionn, 'was the boar that thou slew in the glen,

día atorchair leat ammale. eidir eabha is ros ngéidhe
 dia atorchair leat ammale eidir Eabha is Ros nGéidhe.
 when it was overthrown by thee between Eabha and Ros nGéidhe.

40. Gér calma torc droma in eóin. prap do traothus é dá aimdheóin
 Gér calma torc Droma in Eóin prap do thraothuis é dá aimhdheóin ;
 Though valiant was the boar of Druim in Eoin, quickly thou subduedest him in his spite ;

torc mhoighe glinn ba mór tairm. torc fionnabhrach torc finnchairn
 torc Mhoighe Glinn ba mór tairm, torc Fionn-abhrach, torc Fionn-chairn.
 the boar of Magh Glinn that was a great noise, the boar of Fionn-abhair, the boar of Fionn-
 charn.

41. Torc ríoghchoille do thraoth gníom. torc boirche torc rois na ríogh
 Torc Ríogh-Choille do thraoth gníomh, torc Bhoirche, torc Rois na Ríogh,
 The boar of Ríogh-Choill the deed subdued ; the boar of Boirche, the boar of Ros na Ríogh,

torc cinnfheabhrat torc fuire. naoí ttuirc úaimhe sgannlidh
 torc Cinn Fheabhrat, torc Fuire, naoí ttuirc úaimhe Sgainnlidhe.
 the boar of Ceann Fheabhrat, the boar of Fuire, nine boars of the cave of Sgainnlidh.

42. Do marbhois torc ag áth néid. fris ar gabh gráin in fhéin
 Do marbhois torc ag Áth Néid fris ar gabh gráin in Fhéin,
 Thou slew a boar at Áth Néid, concerning which, horror had seized the whole Fian,

torc asleibh cuillinn tar lear. & torc droma lighean
 torc a Sléibh Cuillinn tar lear, agus torc Droma Lighean.
 the boar from Sliabh Cuillinn across the ocean, and the boar of Druim Lighean.

43. Ro marbhuis torc ag áth lóich. & naoí ttuirc ag ath cróich
 Ro marbhuis torc ag Áth Lóich is naoí ttuirc ag Áth Cróich,
 Thou slew a boar at Áth Lóich, and nine boars at Áth Cróich,

torc cnámhchoille torc clochair. & torc droma os bothaibh
 torc Cnámh-Choille, torc Clochair, is torc Droma ós Bothaibh
 the boar of Cnámh-Choill, the boar of Clochar, and the boar of Druim ós Bothaibh.

44. Airiomh do gniomh is do ghal. is lía líon na anúathadh
 Airiomh do gniomh is do ghal — is lía líon na a n-úathadh
 An enumeration of thy deeds and thy prowess — and more the numbers than their fewness.

óro cuireadh coineill ort. gus in laithe fa attaoí inocht
 ó ro cuireadh coin-éill ort gus in latha fá attaoí anocht.'
 since a hound's leash was put upon thee to the day on which thou art to-night.

45. Eirgis bran fa baile abeadg. & crothais uile in learg
 Eirgis Bran — fa bailc a beadhg — is crothais uile in learg ;
 Bran arose — bold was his leap — and he shook the whole slope ;

teithis in torc tar slíabh. ád chí bran da hinnsuidhe
 teichis in torc tar slíabh : ad-chí Bran dá ionnsuidhe.
 the boar fled across the mountain : he sees Bran approach him.

46. Fada in rúaig óbhearnus móir. go slíabh teithidh asloighthi slóigh
 Fada in rúaig ó Bhearnus móir go Sliabh Teithidh a sloighthi slóigh
 Far the pursuit from great Bearnus to Sliabh Teithidh that engulfed hosts,

no gur fhost bran borb in torc. leis andearnadh in tromolc
 no gur fhost Bran borb in torc leis a ndearnadh in trom-olc
 until finally fierce Bran held fast the boar by whom the great evil was wrought.

47. Léigis in muic greach na ceann. no go cclos úathi fon gleann
 Léigis in muic grach na ceann no go cclos uathi fon gleann ;
 The boar let out a squeal from the head until it was heard from him throughout the glen ;

tainic isin cnoc na dáil. aitheach adheitigh anbháil
 táinic isin cnoc 'na dáil aitheach adhéitigh an-bháil.
 he came from the hill to meet him, an abominable churl of great strength.

48. Ann ro ráidh aitheach in chnuic. leiccidh uaibh damhsa mo muic
 Ann ro ráidh aitheach in chnuic, 'leiccidh úaibh damh-sa mo muic ;
 Then the churl of the hill said, loose my pig from you to me ;

na bithí gan anmain uile. ar son anma áonmhuice
 na bithí gan anmain uile ar son anma áon-mhuice.
 be ye all not without all life for the sake of the life of a single pig.

49. Ro chúalaidh failbhe mac floinn. & caoínche fear go roinn
 Ro-chúalaidh Failbhe mac Floinn, agus Caoínche fear go roinn,
 Failbhe son of Flann hears, and Caoínche, a man of generosity,

ad cluin rindolbh glan gle. & cúan cruimghlinne
 ad-cluin Rindolbh glan glé, agus Cúan Cruimghlinne.
 Rindolbh clean and bright hears, and Cuan Cruimghlinne

50. Eirgidh in ceathrar glan garg. gus in aitheach nán niomard
Eirgidh in ceathrar glan garg gus in aitheach n-án n-iomard ;
The bright, fierce quartet rise to the conspicuous, towering churl ;

(19 v.) mona dheachradh dráidheacht dhe. robadh aithreach dhó inéirge
mona dheachradh dráoidheacht dhe robadh aithreach dhó i n-éirge.
except that druidry clung to him ; him had repented their approach

51. Teagaid féarsin beim ar bheim. go ttréan na hoidhche do chéin
Teagaid iar sin beim ar bheim go ttrian na hoidhche do chéin,
They give thereafter blow for blow for a third of the night, a long time,

gur cheangail dirsé¹³ in ceathrar fear. dirsibh asgíeath¹⁴ sa sgainnear
gur cheangail in ceathrar fear d'irsibh a sgéith sa sgainnear.
until he bound the quartet of men with the straps of his shield in the melee.

52. Do chúalaidh sin áodh mac finn. & glas in ghaisgidh ghrind
Do-chualaidh sin Áodh mac Finn agus Glas in ghaisgidh ghrind
Aodh son of Fionn heard and Glas of the sharp weapons.

do chúalaidh sin aodh mac finn l dáire go ngus. & in deagláocho donnghus
do-chualaidh Dáire go ngus, agus in deagh-láocho Donnghus.
Dáire the high spirited heard, and Donnghus the good warrior.

53. Eirgid in ceathrar sin súas. gus inaitheach ba lór lúas
Éirgid in ceathrar sin suas gus in aitheach ba lór lúas ;
That quartet arise to the churl who was quick enough ;

nochar lugha accomhlann de. go trian oile na hoidhche
nochar lugha a ccomhlann de go trian oile na hoidhche.
not lesser was their contest with him than another third of the night.

54. Ceanngluis in taitheach go nuair. in tochtar láoch go lánbhúaidh
Ceangluis in t-aitheach go n-uair in t-ochtár láoch go lán-bhúaidh ;
The churl bound proudly bound the octet of warriors, fully victorious ;

foimhnis fir ateanntaibh trá¹⁵. dus rat for leir na tulchá
foimhnis fir a tteanntaibh trá ; dos-rat for leir na tulchá
he guarded over¹⁶ the men in their bonds then ; he carried them on the path of the mound.

¹³ Deleted by the scribe. Murphy has emended to the analytic verb *cheanghail sé*, deleting only the letters *dir*, but it is clear that the scribe had merely jumped to *dirsibh* in the next line. The emendation is counterproductive, as it makes a perfectly good line hypersyllabic and adds a modernism. P (q. 56) has the s-preterite : *ceanglas in t-aitheach iad-soin*, with the alternative modernism of the independent acc. pronoun ; (the rhyme is also different).

¹⁴ It is interesting that Mac Neill's silent emendation, to a genitive of *sgíth* has been accepted as the sole attestation of the form in Dinneen's lexicon and in *DIL*. It is not condoned by *IGT* declension § 96. Murphy reads the tall *e* as slender, which is unusual for this scribe's orthography, but gives the usual form.

¹⁵ final *-th* deleted by punctum.

¹⁶ Mac Neill guessed 'reduces (?) now to straits the men' without giving reasons, and Murphy remained silent on this word. It is a form of *fo-moinethar* which has outlived its deponent conjugation. It is notable that the other recension collapses this quatrain and the next, eliminating this difficult line.

55. Fionn & bran issin torc. alt ar alt is cnoc ar chnoc
 Fionn ocus Bran is in torc alt ar alt is cnoc ar chnoc ;
 Fionn and Bran and the boar ravine to ravine and hill to hill ;

nochar cuimhgheator ní dhe nir gaph airm nior loisc teine
 nochar cuimhgheator ní dhe ; níor gabh arm, níor loisc teine
 they attained nothing from him ; no weapon captured him, no fire scorched him.

56. Gabhuis in taitheach é ar druim. is do cuir ara ghualuinn
 Gabhuis in t-aitheach é ar druim is do chuir ara ghualuinn ;
 The churl proceeded to take it on [his] back and put it on his shoulders ;

ní raibhe ag fionn nó ag bran de. acht afheaghadh da éise
 ní raibhe ag Fionn nó ag Bran de acht a fheaghadh dá éise.
 there was nothing for Fionn and Bran from it, save beholding his track.

57. Geis is ágh is armirt ort. muna lena thú do thorc
 [Aitheach:] 'Geis is ágh is airmirt ort muna leana thú do thorc
 [Churl:] 'A spell and fate and prohibition upon thee unless thou pursue thy boar

ní maith suarraighe¹⁷ re seilg. a finn mic qmhaill airmdeirg
 ní maith suarraighe re seilg, a Fhinn mic Cumhaill airm-dheirg
 Trifling is not good on a hunt, O Fionn Mac Cumhaill of the bloody weapons.

58. Bíadh tu fo gheassaibh sa fféin. muna lena tú in torc *budhdhéin*
 Bíadh tú fo gheassaibh sa fféin muna lena tú in torc budhéin ;
 Thou shalt be under spells in the Fian unless thou pursue the boar itself ;

bíadh fo gheasoibh bran búadhach. in cú aloinn iolbhúadhach
 bíadh fo gheasoibh Bran búadhach in cú álainn iol-bhúadhach.'
 Precious Bran shall be under spells the beautiful hound of many virtues.'

59. Do raghainnsi leat ar fionn. día ffaghoinn comhaidh da chionn
 'Do-raghainnsi leat,' ar Fionn 'día ffaghoinn comhaidh dá chionn:
 'I would go with thee,' quoth Fionn, 'if I would get a favour in return:

madh día leighthea liom co beacht. mochtóir láoch umchoimhideacht
 madh día¹⁸ léightheá liom co beacht m'ochtóir láoch i m'choimhideacht.'
 if thou wouldst loose them up to me entirely, my octet of warriors in my retinue.'

60. Rod fía bheannastusain¹⁹ leissin. amic cumhaill chatharmoigh
 [Aitheach:] 'Rod fía bheannastusain leissin, a Mic Cumhaill chath-armoigh:
 [Churl:] 'Therewith, thou shalt have a blessing, O MacCumhaill of bloody battles:

rachoidh dhuit aisgidh oile. sní ba haisdear midhlaighe
 rachaidh dhuit aisgidh oile 's ní ba haisdear midhlaighe.
 another request shall be thine, and it will be no journeyman's rounds.

61. Sgaoílís in taitheach go nuail donochtóir láoch go lánbhúaidh
 Sgaoílís in t-aitheach go n-uail don ochtar láoch go lán-bhúaidh.
 The churl unbound proudly the octet of warriors fully victoriously.

¹⁷ Mac Neill (*DF* I, p. 41) has misread a ligatured double *r* as *ir*, causing him to create a slender ghost form.

¹⁸ Possibly a form from OG *día n-*, although it could be explained as merely *dá* attracted to a slender vowel.

¹⁹ An odd combination of suspensions used incorrectly : bh-suspension-nas-z (always used for -us)-ain.

& teagaitt leis féarsin. gus in síth os gliond deichit
 ocus teagaitt leis iar sin gus in sídh ós Gliond Deichit.
 and they come with him thereafter to the sídh over Gleann Deichit.

62. Mar rangattar in dorus. tug iníear fleasg fo chomas
 Mar rangattar in dorus tug in iar fleasg fo chomas²⁰ ;
 As the door was reached he then took a wand in his power ;

tuc buille don torc go rath. gur maocháomh óg ildhealbhach
 tuc buille don torc go rath gur macháomh óg il-dhealbhach.
 he gave a stroke to the boar effectually, so that it became a fine-formed young warrior.

63. IAR sin do chottar sa síodh. fúarattar fáilte gan fhíach
 Iar sin do-chottar sa síodh ; fúarattar fáilte gan fhíach ;
 After that, they repaired into the sídh ; they received welcome without ill-will ;

ro coirgeadh féatt na suidhe. ar in gcolbha ngloinídhe
 ro coirgheadh iatt 'na suidhe ar in gcolbha ngloinídhe.
 they were arranged, seated upon bright couches.

64. Teagor cáogha giolla nóg. chuca asteach do tabhairt póg
 Teagar cáogha giolla n-óg chuca asteach do tabhairt póg ;
 Some people are brought in : fifty young lads to give them kisses ;

lodar na ndiáigh milibh snas. caoga macaom fial foltchas
 lodar 'na ndiáigh mílibh snas caoga macaom fial foltchas.
 they came after them with thousands of elegances, fifty children with flowing locks.

65. Trí cháoga ban bratúaine. issin tigh co meidh nuaille
 Trí cháoga ban brat-úaine issin tigh co méidh n-uaille,
 Three fifties of green-robed ladies [come] into the house with a quantity of pride,

(20 v.) ro suidh gach bean díobh gan gheis. affail achéile comhadhuis
 ro shuidh gach bean díobh gan gheis a ffail a chéile comh-adhuis.
 each one of the ladies sat without a prohibition beside her well-matched partner

66. Rioghan caomh issin tigh tall. ba fíor áille don chineadh chlann
 Rioghan caomh issin tigh tall ba²¹ áille don chineadh chlann ;
 The fair queen across in the house was the greatest beauty of mankind ;

fearuis fáilti fris in rí. re mac cumhaill a halmhainí
 fearuis fáilti fris in rí, re mac Cumhaill Almhainí²²
 the king bade welcome to him, to Mac Cumhaill of Almhain

²⁰ Mac Neill translates it is 'from behind,' which indicates that his reading was based on *co-* with *mas*, 'thigh,' 'posterior.' No such compound appears in any lexicon. PLMR *gan chonas*, 'without ill-intent.' Read *chumas*.

²¹ Murphy's suggestion for emendation to correct the metrical fault (DF III, p. 38) is confirmed by the readings of all other MSS.

²² The preposition is obviously an error, because not only does the genitive follow, but the line is hypersyllabic with it.

67. Do gnítear anfhosaigh ann. ahocht Síothluibh dairgead bhán
 Do-gnítear in fhosaig²³ ann a hocht síothluibh d'airgead bhán,
 Then the serving is done from eight dippers of white silver,

& síothal chumhdaigh óir. dfionn mac cumhaill mic tréinmhóir
 agus Síothal chumhdaigh óir d'Fionn mac Cumhaill mic Tréanmhóir.
 and a dipper of gilt covering of gold for Fionn son of Cumhall son of Tréanmhór.

68. Núa gacha bídh sean gacha dighe. do radadh do lucht in tighe
 Núa gach bídh sean gach dighe do-radadh do lucht in tighe ;²⁴ (.I.)
 The new of every food, the old of every drink was served to the people of the house ;

fuarrattar oirfittigh ann. imaráon is cáinius comradh
 fuarrattar oirfittidh ann i mar áon is cáinius comradh.
 they received musick then, along with the most refined of conversation.

69. An tan ros gabh accuirm cách. is ann atabhairt in tóglách
 An tan ros gabh a ccuirm cách, is ann a tabhairt in t-ógláoch,
 When their ale got to them all, it was then that the young warrior said,

créad anois ata ar thaire. a mhic qmaill ahalmhaine
 'Cread anois atá ar th'aire, a mhic Cumaill a hAlmhaine?'
 'What is on thy mind, O Mac Cumhaill of Almhain?'

70. IS eadh ata ar muidh ar fionn. óatáoi-si ag briathraibh liom
 'Is eadh atá ar m'uidh,' ar Fionn, 'ó atáoi-si ag briathraibh liom,
 'This is what is at my attention,' quoth Fionn, 'since thou hast words with me,

cía sibhse amuinntir mheanmnach. chindios ar gach aoínteaghlach
 cía sibhse, a muinntir mheanmnach chindias ar gach aoín-theaghlach?'
 who are ye, o spirited folk, who rise above every single household?'

71. Enna mac labhair thuinne. mainm ar in láoch go loinne
 'Eanáan mac Labhair Thuinne m'ainm,' ar in láoch go loinne,
 'Eanáan son of Labhar Thuinne is my name,' quoth the warrior gladly,

craoíbhfinn mo bhean caom gan chrádh. .i. mhaisseach manannáin
 'Craoíbhfinn mo bhean caomh gan chrádh inghean maiseach Manannáin.
 'Craobhfinn is my fair wife without pain, a daughter of Manannán.

72. IS hé is líon dar ccloind go beacht. áon .i. agus áon mhac
 Is hé is líon d'ar ccloind go beacht : áon inghean agus áon mhac ;
 This is the number of our children exactly : one daughter and one son ;

uathach ainm in mhic go lí. sgáthach ainm na hingin í
 Uathach ainm in mhic go lí ; Sgáthach ainm na hingine.
 Uathach is the name of the handsome son ; Sgáthach is the name of the daughter.

²³ Mac Neill translated as 'serving' ; Murphy desires to emend *a n-ósaig*, 'footwashing.' This debate is a tempest in a teapot, for *fosaic* is attested as an extant form of *osaic* with inorganic *f* even in OG (vid. *DIL*, *osaic*, *fosaic* [late examples in -g are listed] ; *Dinneen*, *osaic*), and is used as service in general and as footwashing.

²⁴ Murphy's emendation to *do-rad* is possible ; the other recension has passive *tuccadh*, although there is no justification for a prototonic form, which may have caused Aodh Ó Dochartaigh to emend here without thinking about the metre.

73. Neach is eagnach dhuinn díbh. samalta a eagusc lé rígh
 [Fionn:] 'Neach is eagnach dhúinn díbh samalta a eagusc le rígh ;
 [Fionn:] 'The one that is visible to us of them, like is his appearance to a king's ;

día ffaicmis iningean áin. do bearmaois atuarusgbháil
 día ffaicmis in inghean áin, do-bhearmaois a tuarusgbháil.'
 If we should see the splendid daughter, we could give her description.'

74. IS ann sin dus radadh asteach. sgáthach aluinn iolchrothach
 Is ann sin dos-radadh asteach Sgáthach áluinn iol-chruthach ;
 It is then that she was brought in, beautiful, well-proportioned Sgáthach ;

rug búaidh ar dheilbh is ar druinne. ó mhnaibh talmhan tonn bhuidh
 rug buaidh ar dheilbh is ar druinne ó mhnaibh talmhan tonn-bhuidhe.
 she surpassed in complexion and in form the women of the yellow surfaced world.

75. Líonais aseirc nir ffeidm fóil. fionn mac cumaill mic treinmóir
 Líonais a seirc – níorbh fheidm fóil — Fionn mac Cumhaill mic Tréanmóir ;
 Love of her filled – it was no gentle force — Fionn son of Cumhall son of Tréanmór ;

targaidd .x. gcéad dagach crodh. is feis bliadhna gan bháoghal
 targaidd deich gcéad dá gach crodh is feis bliadhna gan bháoghal.
 he offers ten hundred of every kind of his stock and a year's marriage without danger.

76. Targaidd da brathair go nuair. sgiath is cloidheam go neart crúaidh
 Targaidd dá brathair go n-uair sgiath is cloidheamh go neart cruaidh ;
 He offers to her brother proudly a shield and sword of hard power ;

targaidd ina coibhche dhe. cead uinge dór orloisce
 targaidd ina coibhche dhe cead uinge d'ór orloisce.
 he offers in her bride price to him a hundred ounces of refined gold.

77. Creid leat súd ar hathair. rissin finngil go rathaibh
 'Créid leat súd?' ar a hathair rissin finn-ghil go rathaibh,
 'How is that with thee?' quoth her father graciously to the fair one,

gidh maith bean ní headh is fearr atochmar tar ahéigheann
 gidh maith bean ní headh is fearr a tocmarc tar a héigheann
 'Although a wife is a good thing it is better not to woo her through forcing her.'

78. Gin gur fear dingbhala damh. conmháor con gé rom iarradh
 [Sgáthach:] 'Gin gur fear ding-bhala damh conmháor con gé rom iarradh,
 [Sgáthach:] 'Though the man that is an equal match for me is not a dog-keeper of hounds,
 though he requested me,

nocha bhiusa ann bar nadhaigh. go nach um táir tromfhalaidd
 nocha bhia-sa ann bar n-adhaigh go náchum-tháir trom-fhalaidd.'
 I shall not be against thy will, lest grievous disgrace reach me.'

79. Cuirtheas ar gualainn in Rígh. aningean luchar lán mhín
 Cuirtheas ar gualainn in Rígh in ingean luchair lán-mhín
 She is set beside the King : the radiant daughter most delicate

is naisgis acoibhche iear sin. ar mac cumhail ahalmhain
 is naisgis a coibhche iar sin ar mac Cumhaill a hAlmhain.
 and he pledged her dowry after that to Mac Cumhaill of Almhain.

80. O atáoi anois ad cliamhain dhúinn. ar enann go ccrotaibh ciúil
'Ó atáoi anois id cliamhain dhúinn,' ar Eaná n go ccrotaibh ciúil,
'Since thou art now son-in-law to us,' quoth Eaná n of the musical harps,

(20 v.) uime ro breagsam thú alleith. do deixin ar muinntaire
'uime ro bhreagsam thú a leith do déicsin ar muinntaire.
'for that we tricked you hither, to see our people.

81. IS é mo macsa in torc trom. do inbhir oruibh an fforlann
Is é mo mhac-sa in torc trom do inbhir oruibh forlann²⁵ ;
The massive boar is my son who played the violence on you ;

mé fein in fomhóir fuirmheach. do rinne *bhur* ccrúadhchuibhreach
mé féin in fomhóir fuirmheach do-rinne *bhur* ccrúadh-chuibhreach.
I myself am the giant-in-likeness²⁶ that did your hard-fettering.

82. Ó tharrusa bar mbáoghal. gan neart sgíath gan neart bfáobhar
Ó tharras-sa bhar mbáoghal gan neart sgíath, gan neart bhfáobhar,
Since I obtained your bettering without strength of shields, without force of arms,

rod fía éaruic dháoi bh ann sin. dór sgíath is dairgead is do mháoinibh
rod fía éaruic dháoi bh ann sin d'ór is d'airgead is de mháoinibh.
there is an honour-price for thee for those then, of gold and of silver and of riches.

83. In tochtar úd d'fiannuibh fáil. raghaidh ina neineach dháibh
In t-ochtar úd d'Fiannuibh Fáil raghaidh ina n-eineach dháibh
That octet of the Fianna of Ireland : there shall be, as their honour prices for them,

dhá comhoil óir gach fir díbh. is aceathoir don airdrígh
dhá chumhail óir gach fíor díbh is a ceathair don aird-rígh.
two cumhals of gold for each one of them and four for the high-king.

84. Beir leat ocht nailt cloideam. do deargóir íear na noigheath
Beir leat ocht n-ealta²⁷ cloideamh ; do dearg-óir íar na n-oidheadh,
Take with thee eight sword hilts ; of red-gold for the killings,

iocfaightear bar ccoin cháomha. is bar sleagha snascháola
iocfaightear bar ccoin cháomha is bar sleagha snas-cháola.
restitution for your dear hounds and your smooth, fine spears.

85. Beir leat fós m'fichill afhinn. beir mo sgíeath is ór go rinn
Beir leat fós m'fhichill, a Fhinn ; beir mo sgíath — is ór go rinn —
Take with thee also my chess-set, O Fíonn ; take my shield — 'tis gold to the edge —

beir mfainne dearccóir go mblaidh. fíu cead gach cloch dá clochaibh
beir m'fhainne dearcc-óir go mblaidh — fíu cead gach cloch dá clochaibh.
take my red-gold ring honourably — worth a hundred, each stone of its stones.

²⁵ The line in the MS is hypermetrical ; the P recension has a modernism eliding *do* (d'imir). The archetype must have been faulty here.

²⁶ Mac Neill translated as 'guarding,' but in bold with a mark of query. No definition is given it in *DIL* (*fuirmech*), where this occurrence of the word is cited along with an appearance in the metrical *dindsheanchas* of LL and later MS copies. It could be from OG *formid*, 'shape,' vn. *foirm* ; or *forruma*, a *guard*, which is the derivation implied by Mac Neill's translation.

²⁷ As Murphy noted, *DF* III p. 39, n. 84a, *alt* is 'blade,' but *ealta*, 'hilt' ; the form must be restored thus to give a disyllabic gen pl. for syllable count. The form *n-ealta* is found in P q. 92a.

86. Beir mo sithal is séatt slúaigh. a finn mic cumhaill armdhéarg
 Beir mo Síothal — is séatt slúaigh, a Fhinn mic Cumhaill arm-dhearg ;
 Take my Dipper — it is treasure for an host, O Fionn Mac Cumhaill of the bloody arms ;

déad is ór is airgead hí. gloine gorm is fionndhruin í
 déad is ór is airgead hí, gloine gorm is fionn-dhruin í.
 it is gold and silver and ivory, blue crystal and white-bronze.

87. Beir leat in sithil snuadhaigh. ameic cumhaill cathbhúadhaigh
 Beir leat in Síthil snuadhaigh, a mheic Cumhaill chath-bhúadhaigh,
 Take with thee the beautiful Dipper, O son of battle-victorious Cumhall,

ré taobh seacht bfailgeadh gan acht. ar gomad feirdi himteacht
 ré taobh seacht bhfailgeadh gan acht ar gomad fearrd' a himtheacht.
 alongside of seven torques without flaw²⁸ that its departure may be better.

88. Tabhair cora damhsa dhe. cor anfir ar achéile
 Tabhair cora damh-sa dhe cor in fir ar a chéile
 Give pledges to me for it, a pledge of a man to his peer,

gé cuin deach mo mhac sa bféin. ambeith uile día oighréir
 gé cuin deach mo mhac sa bhFéin, a mbeith uile dia oigh-réir.
 that when my son goes into the Fian, all be obedient to him.

89. Do radsat cora íearsin. ré henán anóidhche sin
 Do-radsat cora iar sin ré hEnán in oidhche sin,
 They gave pledges after that to Eanáin that night,

is tucsan cora gan oil. fa chongnamh leó accumachtoibh
 is tuc-san cora gan oil fa chongnamh leó i ccumachtoibh.
 and he gave pledges without blemish to aid them in (magical) powers.

90. Déargaighítear inímdhaidh náin. taoscca fionn ina comdháil
 Déargaighítear in iomdhaidh n-áin ; taoscca Fionn ina comdháil ;
 The pleasant bed is dressed ; soonest [was] Fionn in approaching it ;

siris sgáthach mar do luidh. íasacht cruite inoirfittigh
 siris Sgáthach mar do luidh íasacht cruite in oirfittigh.
 Sgáthach sought as she came a loan of the harp of the musician.

91. An cruit cháomhsin na ttri ttéad. gidhisséin ba lór améad
 In cruit cháomh sin na ttri ttéad gidh isséin ba lór a méad :
 That dear harp was three-stringed ; though thus their balance was sufficient :

tead airgid tead umha áin. & tead iarúinn iomláin
 tead airgid, tead umha áin, ocus tead iarúinn iomláin.
 a string of silver, a string of pure copper and a string of perfect iron.

92. Anmanna na ttéad nar throm. geantoir gleis golltar ghless oll
 Anmanna na ttéad nár throm : Geantoir-ghlés, Golltar-ghlés oll ;
 The names of the strings which were not sad : Geantoir-ghlés, mighty Golltar-ghlés ;

súairntar ghles in gleas oile. fa andeantís cách ciamhaire
 Súantar-ghlés in gleas oile, fa a ndeantís cách ciamhaire.
 Suarntear-ghlés is the other tuning, which made each under melancholy.

²⁸ Pace Murphy, *DF* III, p. 40, n. 87c.

93. Da seinnti in golltar ghless grinn. do ríoghaibh in beatha binn
 Dá seinnti in Golltar-ghlés grinn do ríoghaibh in beatha binn,
 If clear Golltar-ghlés were played to kings of high estate,

gach accluinfeadh gan doghra. do beithdís fo bioth dhógra
 gach a ccluinfeadh gan doghra, do bheithdís fo bioth-dhógra.
 each who would hear without sorrows, they would be in continual sorrows.

94. Día séinte in geantar ghles glan. do ríoghaibh troma in talmhain
 Día séinnti in Geantar-ghlés glan do ríoghaibh troma in talmhain,
 If clear Geantar-ghlés were played to the mighty kings of the earth,

gach accluinfeadh gan táire. do beittís ag siorgháire
 gach a ccluinfeadh gan táire, do beittís ag síor-gháire.
 each who would hear without contempt, they would be in perpetual laughter.

95. Día séinnti in súantear ghless slán. do ríoghaibh in beathabáin
 Día séinnti in Súantear-ghlés slán do ríoghaibh in bheatha báin,
 If perfect Suantear-ghlés were played to kings of glorious estate,

(21 r.) gach accluinfeadh mor in modh. do beittís na síorcodladh
 gach a ccluinfeadh — mor in modh — do beittís 'na síor-codladh.
 each who would hear — great the marvel — they would be soundly asleep.

96. Seindis an ínghean fhatach. in súantear ghleas co gnáthach
 Seindis in inghean fhathach in Súantear-ghléas co gnáthach,
 The skillful daughter played the Suantear-ghles as usual,

gor cuir na ttoirrchim súain. finn mac qmaill in caoimsluaigh
 gur chuir 'na ttoirrchim súain Finn mac Cumhaill in caóimh-shluaigh.
 until she put him into deep slumber, Fionn Mac Cumhaill of the dear host.

97. Cuirtear na ttrom codlad cach. Bran is in tochtar oglách
 Cuirtear 'na ttrom-codladh cach, Bran is in t-ochtar oglách ;
 All were put into deep sleep, Bran and the octet of warriors ;

go meadón laoi mór in modh. ro bhadar na ttrom codladh
 go meadhón laoi — mór in modh — ro bhadar 'na ttrom codladh.
 until the middle of the day — great the marvel — they were in deep sleep.

98. Mar do eirigh grían os fiodh. doibhsion roba mór in cion
 Mar do éirigh grían ós fiodh — dóibh-sion ro ba mór in cion —
 As the sun rose over the wood — for them the booty was great —

ann do batar ag bearnus. géar lugha leó afflaitheamnus
 ann do batar ag Bearnas, géar lugha leó a fflaitheamnus.
 there they were in Bearnas, although they disliked their dominion.

99. A chú féin ag gach fear dhibh. is asleagh buileach bláithmín
 A chú féin ag gach fear dhíbh is a sleagh baileach bláith-mín
 Each man of them had his own hound and precise, smooth-worn spear

in tór san tairgead miadh ngal. na seoid & in tsithal
 in t-ór 's in t-airgead — miadh ngal, na seoid agus in t-Síothal.
 the gold and the silver — battle honour, the jewels and the Dipper.

100. Íar sin tiomhsaighit in fhían. eidir anoir is aníar
 Íar sin thiomhsaighit in Fhían eidir anoir is aníar,
 After that the Fian gathered from east and west,

gur innis fionn doibh gan gheis. abeith oidhche na fféagmais
 gur innis Fionn dóibh gan gheis a beith oidhche na fféagmais.
 and Fionn told them without restraint what had been in the night of their absence.

101. Na haibairsi sin a Rí. a mhic cumaill go ccaoímh lí
 [Féinidhe:] 'Na haibair-si sin a Rí a mhic Cumail go ccaoímh lí :
 [Men of the Fian:] 'Say that not, O King, O Mac Cumhaill of comely complexion :

ó mhaidin dúinn ar in seilg. uait a chosgaraigh chróidheirg
 ó mhaidin dúinn ar in seilg uait, a chosgaraigh chróidheirg.'
 since morning we have been hunting away from thee, O crimson victor.'

102. Áisnéidhis fionn na sgéala. sa attugadh air do mhéla
 Áisnéidhis Fionn na sgéala 's a attugadh air do mhéla
 Fionn related the tales and what disgrace befell him

do rat fionn comartha gar. na seoíd & in tsíthal
 do-rat Fionn comartha gar, na seoíd agus in t-Sítheal.
 Fionn soon gave proof, the jewels and the Dipper.

103. Do ráidh fionn go meadhrach mór. mar do deagladh é re ashlógh
 Do-ráidh Fionn go meadhrach mór mar do deagladh re a shlógh,²⁹
 Fionn told most gladly how he was separated from his host,

mar do dealbadh oidhche is lá. don bloigh atgairit dáonlá
 mar do dealbadh oidhche is lá don bloigh atgairit d'áon-lá.
 how a night and a day was created of the short fragment of one day.

104. Dona húairaibh do creid fionn. in tansin do Rígh na rinn
 Dona úairaibh do chreid Fionn in tan sin do Rígh na rinn,
 Of the times that Fionn believed in the King of Stars, that was one,

nógo ndeachaidh tar sál sean. Rí na ndámh is na ndeighfear
 nó go ndeachaidh tar sál sean Rí na ndámh is na ndeigh-fear.
 until he went across the old salt sea, the King of the heroes and of the good men.

105. Roinnis fionn na seacht ffáilghe. do seacht mhnáibh lór aille
 Ro innis Fionn na seacht ffáilghe do seacht mnáibh lór aille :
 Fionn divided the seven rings to seven women right beautiful :

deattaoin dáoiife áodhbha attáoihb. daillbhe rúitheanta ro chaoímh
 d'Éadaoin d'Aoife — áobhdha a ttáoihb, d'Aillbhe rúitheanta ro chaoímh.
 to Éadaoin, to Aoife — beautiful her side, to radiant Aillbhe so comely.

106. Do rat damsa in fainne óir. do bhíu céad da gach crodh cóir
 Do-rat damh-sa in fainne óir do bhíu céad dá gach crodh cóir,
 He gave me the golden ring worth a hundred of each of his good stock,

in ficeall dosgar go mbladh. & do chaoilti in tsithal
 in ficeall d'Osgar go mbladh is do Chaoilti in t-Síothal.
 the chess-set to renowned Osgar and to Caoilte the Dipper.

²⁹ If one follows MG rules and does not elide, then the independent pronoun is unnecessary.

107. Seacht mbliadhna dhi ag caoíliti cóir. don tsithil maisigh mhínóir
 Seacht mbliadhna dhi ag Caoíliti cóir don t-Síthil maisigh mhín-óir,
 Seven years at true Caoilte for it, for the goodly polished gold dipper,

go ttainic in fáth má ffuil. a faghail os duibh eochair
 go ttainic in fáth, má ffuil, a faghail ós Duibh-eochair.
 until the reason came, as it is, for getting it above Duibh-eochair.

108. Áon do ló ag duibheochair dhúinn. meisi is fionn ba haidbhle rúinn
 Áon do ló ag Duibh-eochair dhúinn : meisi is Fionn — ba haidbhle rúinn,
 One day we were at Duibh-eochair : I myself and Fionn — vast was his wile,

osgar mac cruimchinn rom car. gúaire gilla na sithal
 Osgar, mac Cruimchinn³⁰ rom char, Gúaire gilla na Síothal.
 Oscar, the son of Cruimcheann who loved me, Guaire the lad of the Dippers.

109. Siris gúaire digh uisge. ar chaoíliti ba maith tuixe
 Siris Gúaire digh uisge ar Chaoíliti : ba maith t-uisge.
 Guaire entreated a drink of water from Caoilte : the water was good.

gabhais gúaire in sithil sláin. is tead le diarraidh fuaráin
 gabhais Gúaire in Síthil sláin is téid le d'iarraidh fuaráin.
 Guaire took the perfect Dipper and goes therewith to seek a spring.

110. Fúair uarán ba maith aníamh. ag in ccnoc re ar taoibh iníar
 Fúair uarán ba maith a níamh ag in ccnoc re ar dtaoibh aníar ;
 He found a spring, good was its sparkle by the hill to our west ;

do thaitin ris sáor in snúadh. in tsreabh línidhi linnfúar
 do-thaitin ris – sáor in snúadh — in tsreabh-línidhi³¹ linn-fhúar.
 it pleased him – unrestrained in look — the torrentially streaming spring-waters.

(21 v.) 111. Cuiris gúaire mhac neachtain. in síthil fan sruth seachtair
 Cuiris Gúaire mhac Neachtain in Síthil fan sruth-seachtair ;
 Guaire son of Neachtan put the Dipper down into the outflow ;

do tuit aniomh domhain úadh. in síthil aloinn innfuar
 do-tuit i n-íomdomhain úadh in Síthil áloinn innfuar.
 it fell into the abyss from him, the beautiful suitably cool Dipper.

112. Coig oinsisigh agus céad. batar dha hiarraidh sní breag
 Coig oinsisigh agus céad batar dhá hiarraidh – 's ní breag –
 A hundred and five divers were seeking it – and it is no lie –

³⁰ vid. Murphy's note 108c, (*DF* III p.40) : The patronymic m. Cruimchinn does not belong with Oscar m. Oisín, but usually with Caoilte, hence the comma. There is, however, a rarer Fenian Oscar m. Cruimchinn. Murphy emends to Caoilte m. Cruimchinn in his note. P has solved the problem with a total rewrite of 112c, including that emendation 'ocus bhéas C.' One could more easily insert a comma, and thus render it 'Oscar, [and] mac Cruimchinn [i.e. Chaoilte] who loved me...'. The text is equivocal, but the *rom char* suggests Caoilte, who is close to Oisín, would be most naturally intended. Furthermore, Caoilte is mentioned in the next quatrain as present, and it is natural that he should be in the list.

³¹ Murphy's note gives the meaning as uncertain. *Línidhe* is found in his glossary in reference to other lays (p. 291). The general sense is clear enough by etymology, even if there is a specific turn to its connotation now unknown. *DIL* (*línide*) has 'marked with lines... of water, lined with ripples'.

ní fuarattar uile dhe. on ló sin síothal Chaoílte
 ní fuarattar uile dhe ón ló sin Síothal Chaoílte.
 they all did not get it from that day the dipper of Caoilte.

113. IS ann adubhairt fionn féin. ris na sluaghaibh go saoircheill
 Is ann adubhairt Fionn féin ris na sluaghaibh go saoir-chéill,
 It was then that Fionn himself said to the hosts with noble understanding,

nochán fíaghtor hí dar líom. on ló aniu go ttí in tailghionn
 'Nochan fíaghtor hí dar líom on ló aniu go ttí in Tailghionn.
 'It shall not be found, meseems, from this day until the Adze-head.

114. Tiucfaidh in tailghionn tar muir. budh sochar do gáoidhealuibh
 Tiucfaidh in Tailghionn tar muir ; budh sochar do Gaoídealuibh :
 The Adze-head shall come across the sea ; he shall be a profit to the Gaedhil :

beanfaidh eirinn ar abroid. is beinneochaidh in tiupraid
 beanfaidh Éirinn ar a broid is beinneóchaidh in tiupraid.
 he shall cut Erin from her captivity and shall bless the fountain.

115. Mar beinneochus in sreibh sláin. Patraic mac calproinn daláimh
 Mar beinneochus in sreibh sláin Pátraic mac Calproinn dá láimh,
 As he shall bless the entire torrent, Patrick son of Calpurn by his hand,

tiucfaidh bradán borb go mblaidh is doigébhaidh in tsithal
 tiucfaidh bradán borb go mblaidh is doigébhaidh in Síthil.³²
 a great salmon shall come triumphantly and summon the dipper.

116. Níamhochthar bachla bána. is cluig agas cólána
 Níamhochthar bachla bána, is cluig agas ceolána,
 There shall be adorned white crosiers, and bells and handbells,

& soisgela sgriobhtha. dor is dairgead na síthla
 ocus soisgela sgriobhtha d'ór is d'airgead na síothla.'
 and written Gospels from the gold and silver of the dipper.'

117. IS íad sin mo sgéla dhuit. a Rí in popail a Patruic
 Is íad sin mo sgéla dhuit, a Rí in popail a Phátruic ;
 Those things are my story for thee, O King of the people, O Patrick ;

nochán fhuil mo mhaoínsa dhe. od chimsi sithal chaoílte
 nochán fhuil mo mhaoín-sa dhe ad-chim-si Síothal Chaoílte.
 my benefit is not from it when I see Caoilte's dipper.

===Sithal===

Notes

^a The word *síothal* is itself worthy of some comment. The word is given by *DIL* under *síthal* as a borrowing from the Latin diminutive *situla*, and meaning a 'a vessel for drawing water, a bucket', as does the Latin. The spelling *sítheal* is condemned by the bardic grammarians. The word also appears spelt as *síthiol* in the text ; this is the spelling which is to be found in Dinneen's dictionary with the same meaning as *DIL* gives, but it is no better to the bardic

³² The form must be restored to the acc. by rhyme. Murphy emended in *t-Síothail* in his note, but that form is not condoned by *IGT* declension § 37 nor is it found anywhere else. Vid. note A to this text.

grammarians. *IGT* gives § 37 'síthal .c. (sítheal .l.)' In the exempla, one finds the word twice used:

1. Géill fa **shíthlaibh** óir ghá n-iumchar. ag ríghraidh fóid Almhan
2. Séd fine ar nach dáigh dícheal. **sítheal** bhile Chláir Chrúachan .l.

The full declension in the orthography of *IGT*, is: Nom. *síthal*, Gen. *síthla[dh]*, Dat. & Acc. *síthil*, pl. Nom. *síthla*, Gen. *síthal*, Dat. *síthlaibh*, Acc. *síthla*. The faulty form *sítheal* appears in A at q. 7b only, where it is not fixed by rhyme. The faulty form is used in P, and so it has not been corrected away.

Unfortunately, the item described in this lay can in no wise be a 'bucket,' although it is certainly a small object for fetching water. Mac Neill and Murphy's *DF* translated the term throughout as 'urn', which has very different connotations, and which feels unsatisfactory to the present author. The description is of an object kept at one's side (6a) and which could be picked up out of a spring by Patrick at the closing. Furthermore, its richness in gold and silver suggest a more personal object than a well-bucket. The description of the 'apple' of gold is much like the head of the pins holding the bases on early Irish chalices, e.g. the Ardagh Chalice, where it covers a large portion of the bottom inside. The chains have some resonances of the hanging bowls of the mythological tales. Overall, the description implies something resembling an 'Appalachian-cup,' or slightly archaically a 'dipper.' Unfortunately, the first term is impossible, and the second is imperfect due to other modern English usage of it. Thus 'dipper' is chosen by elimination.

Language

The following forms are worthy of note

- 1a *ros fúair*, infixed pronoun retains full meaning
- 1b *sloinnfet*, 1s future ending has petrified *-d* rather than simply *-a*
- 2b *do-radabhuir*, old perfect of *do-bheir*, but with a lost *s* and later deponent ending
- 2d *caratraidh*, a word that did not survive into the Classical period
- 3d *síothal*, the correct form of the word, according to *IGT* § 37
- 5d *lom-lán*, a late form of *lomnán* with ætiology interfering to make the second element into *lán*
- 7c *nochar*, disyllabic form of the negative
- 8c *nach*, monosyllabic form
- 10b *na flatha*, note the preservation of the OG feminine gender
- 10d *d'fhoigheindís*, the impermissible elision of the preverb *do-* appears to be a modern rewriting; cf. SCP q. 9d, which avoids the fault
- 11a *iadfad-sa*, later form with petrified suffixed pronoun
- 11b *in Síthil áloinn fhionn fhúar*, the noun is in the accusative, but the adjectives are not inflected as accusatives. *Fhúar* is confirmed by its rhyme to *trúagh*.
- 11d *ad-rala*, a good older deuterotonic form
- 13a *día mbámar*, the substantive is in a later form, although it is not fixed so by metre
- 14b *rucsat*, earlier, non-deponent ending
- 17a *ad-conairc*, older form with *r*
- 18d *amhuis*, nom. pl. used for *amhsa*, acc. pl., which is confirmed by rhyme with *ris*, cf. *IGT* declension § 17
- 19a *is tú*, uninflected copula
- 22a *ro ghabhsam*, a good 1pl. *s*-preterite with the older ending
- 23b *ttugsam*, good 1pl. *s*-preterite, older ending
- 26c *thá*, an improper form of *táth* (*IGT* declension § 38) *DIL* lists *tá* as an alternate form worthy of reference, it is evidently an early loss of final *-th*, common in MG, but forbidden in Classical verse.
- 29a *ger bhó*, *nír bhó*, old copula forms, but *níorbh* and *níor* in 29c,d and 30c
- 31d *n-úathmhar n-aidhéitigh n-an-ffhóil*, good accusative adj. backed by rhyme to *mhóir*.

These words in themselves appear suggestive of earlier stages of the language.

- 32c *iná é*, late phrase
 33d independent acc. pronoun
 34c,d *fir* : *n-allaidh*, accusative of the adjective backed by rhyme, (not noted by Murphy)
 35a *ro sginneadar*, later deponent-derived ending
 36b *do-gní tú is Bran*, analytic verb used for subjects in two different persons, including the nom. pronoun *tú*
 36c *do ráidhis*, original preterite of *ráidid* is *rát-*, but the *s*-preterite generally takes over in MG, and *ráidid* with a *t*-preterite is not found even in the *Agallamh* of Stokes, cf. Nuner, op. cit., 259-60. The form *ro ráidh*, a good MG perfect is found in q. 48a
 37a,b *ndéin: chéill*, acc. fixed by rhyme
 38c,d *lá: haitheassa*, *lá* is rhymed with a good accusative plural not noted by Murphy
 42a,b *Néid: Féin*, good acc. fixed by rhyme
 42b *fris*, older preposition
 45a *beadhg*, a word suggestive of the earlier language and which does not survive in the Classical period
 48a,b *chnuic: leiccidh... mo muic*, good acc. fixed by rhyme
 49b *ad-cluin*, a zero-grade present 3s
 53c *nochar*, disyllabic copula
 54c *foimhnis*, a preterite of *fo-moinethar* which has ceased to be deponent in its conjugation. The verb does not survive past the MG period in this form.
 54d *dos-rat*, a good infixed pronoun that bears full meaning
 55c *nochar cuimhgheator*, disyllabic negative, but later verbal ending. *Níor* is used twice in *d*.
 56a independent acc. pronoun (not found in P q. 58a)
 57a *airmirt*, an early word, vn. of *ar-berta*
 57b *lena tú*, analytic verb, also thus in SCP q. 59a
 58a *bíadh tú*, analytic verb, but SCP q. 60a preserves a synthetic form, *Béid fo gheasuibh cuid do t'Fhéin*
 58b *budhéin*, an early form
 60a *rod fía*, an early phrasing using the infixed pronoun
 61c *teagaitt*, old irregular 3pl. of *téit*
 63a *do-chottar*, older form of the preterite of *do-tét* with unbroken *o*
 63c *ro coirgheadh iatt*, independent pronoun with the impersonal verb
 64a *teagar*, earlier *tiagar*
 64c *lodar*, suppletive 3pl. of *téit* preserves *t*-preterite ending
 68b *do-radhadh*, perfect passive, but singular rather than pl. as the subjects require
 69a *ros gabh*, proleptic infixed pronoun (construed in apposition to *cách*)
 73a *neach is eagnach dhúinn*, the phrasing is rather archaic
 73c,d *áin : tuarusgbháil*, the acc. is fixed by rhyme
 74a *dos-radadh*, proleptic infixed pronoun
 75a *níor*, later monosyllabic copula
 75c, 76a,c *targaidh*, glossed by Murphy as 'he offered,' based on Bergin, *Eriu* IX (1932), p. 139. It is taken as a preterite of *to-ro-ad-guid*. The simple verb *tairgim*, its direct descendent, exists in both Ir. & ScG., but the modern verb simply shifts the tense of the form to the narrative present, which is equally plausible. P gives the equivalent reading of *tar(r)ccaidh*. The derivation is certainly correct, but that preterite is prototonic in form, which suggests that even if it is to be read thus as Murphy suggests, then one is seeing the MG tendency of verbal modernisation at work.
 76d *orloisce*, Mac Neill writes 'burnished ?' but it appears to be mere guesswork. Murphy derives it in his vol. III note from OG *forloisgthe* 'purified by fire' which is the gloss of the psalm 'argentum igne examinatum,' Ml. 31c28. *Forloiscthe* survives in the modern language, but with the meaning of 'enkindled ; singed,' as given by Dinneen.
 78b *rom iarraidh*, good infixed pronoun
 78c *nocha bhia-sa*, disyllabic negative with *no-* associated with the secondary tense sequence, but the verb is in the simple future.

- 80a *ataoí ad cliamhain*, the *tá...* *ina* construction
 80c *ro bhreagsam thú*, older *s*-preterite 1pl. ending, but followed by an independent acc. pronoun
 82a *tharras-sa*, broad preterite of *tairrthim*, generally earlier
 82c *rod fía*, a good infixed pronoun.
 87a,b *in síthil snuadhaigh : cath-bhúsdhaigh*, acc. backed by rhyme
 89a *do-radsat*, good suppletive *s*-form preterite of *do-beir*
 90c *do luidh*, suppletive preterite of *téit*
 91a, etc. *crut*, the older term for the harp. The word survives into the Classical language, as it is listed in *IGT* declension § 14 as *cruit*. There, Classical language assigns the slenderised Old & MG acc. as the nom. Because the forms are not metrically fixed, one cannot rule definitively whether this is merely the work of modernising scribes, but the spelling of the nom. as *cruit* is also in P.
 92a *nár*, negative preterite relative copula
 94c, *táire*, an early connotation, the word shifts in the Classical language to mean 'baseness, low-birth'.
 102c *do-rat*, good older preterite of *do-beir*
 102c,d *gar : in t-Sítheal*, faulty form of the nom. used for acc., fixed by rhyme
 103b *do deagladh*, the verb is an odd by-form of *deaghlúighim*.
 106a *do-rat*, good older preterite of *do-beir*
 106c,d *mbladh : in t-Síothal*, nom. used for acc. and fixed by rhyme
 108c *rom char*, good infixed pronoun with full meaning
 110c *do-thaitin*, a good old preterite from *do-aitní*
 111c *do-tuit*, later form
 113c *nochan ffaghthor hí*, the disyllabic negative, but also an independent pronoun with the impersonal verb
 114c,d *broid : tiupraid*, acc. backed by rhyme
 115c,d *mblaidh : in Síthil*, an acc. restored by metrical requirement
 115d *doigébhaiddh*, from *do-gaib*
 117a *is iad*, uninflected copula
 117c *nochan*, disyllabic negative

The only items of note in this recension are a few more words such as *táire* that are not used after the MG period or change meaning. *Thá* (q. 26c) points to a pre-Classical origin, as it is condemned in *IGT*, but not uncommon in MG. The suppletive preterite *lodar* (q. 64c), a common survival in an irregular verb, and *targaidh* (qq. 75 & 76) are the only *t*-type preterites in this recension of the lay (but vid. SCP q. 72b *ad-bheart*) ; other verbs all have *s*-preterite endings substituted. There are more rhyme-backed accusatives noted above which were overlooked by Murphy.

Overall the picture does remain, when viewed from the point of this recension alone, almost as it was sketched by Murphy (*DF* III, p. 36), and it is only to be noted that some of the words which he did not think worthy of noting may, as often, suggest that he may have dated conservatively as usual. The more important consideration in dating this lay is to examine the reading of the other recension in the places where modernisms are found in this one. The preservation of archaisms not present in this MS or the presence of different modernisms, suggesting independent modernisation in the two recensions, which would be suggestive greater antiquity, will be sought. This examination will be undertaken following the notes of the edition of P.

V : *Laoidh Síthil Chaoilti*
Incipit 'Sítheal Chaoílte cia ros fúair'

An edition based on RIA 24 P 5, pp. 383 & seq.

This edition, as this recension from P also exists in other MSS not derived from P itself, has complexities not found in the other editions, which are of texts that are unique. The other MSS and their stemma is discussed above in the final section of the General Introduction, along with the additional notes on principles of selection of readings from the sub-recension of LMR. The English translation has been undertaken in close consultation of the translation of the P recension, that the translations may converge insofar as the Gaelic matches. In places where the recensions employ synonyms, the author has attempted to render each with a different English word, so as to preserve in translation the difference between the recensions.

Caoilte Mac Rónáin ro Chan
Ag tabhairt sgéala a Shítheal do Phátraicc¹

(p. 383) 1. Sítheal Chaoílte cia ros fuair. Sloinnidh dhuinn imbeathaidh búain
Sítheal^a Chaoílte — cia ros fúair — sloinnidh dhuinn i mbeathaidh bhúain ;
Caoilte's dipper — who found it — tell us in good time ;

Failtighidh mo chroidhe cain. sítheal *chaoílte* an charadraid
fáiltighidh mo chroidhe cain — Sítheal Chaoílte in charadraidh.
it gladdens my fair heart — the dipper of Caoilte of the Friendship.

2. Toccaibh in síthil mbicc mbáin. inuair do rala í it láimh
Toccaibh in síthil mbicc mbáin, in uair do-rala it láimh ;
Take thou the bright little dipper, now that it rests in thy hand ;

fada bhás ga hiarraidh soin. san uaran os duibhcheachoir
fada bhás ga hiarraidh soin san uaran ós Duibh-cheachoir.
it was long sought in the spring above Duibh-cheachoir.

3. Deagh easgar is glaine gorm. síthel *chaoilte* na ccead ccórn
Deagh-easgar is glaine gorm, sítheal Chaoilte na ccead ccorn,
A good ewer, and blue crystal, the dipper of Caoilte of the hundred goblets

dearcc ór is aircciod bán. sítheal chaoilte an characcán
dearcc-ór is aircciod bán, sítheal Chaoilte in characcán.
full of red gold and white silver, the dipper of Chaoilte of my kith.

4. Ionmhuin fear da ndailtí dhi. as an síthil slabhraidhghil
Ionmhuin fear dá ndailtí dhi as in síthil slabhraidh-ghil
Dear the man who to whom it was dispensed from it, from the dipper with bright chains

nochar dáileadh do neoch riamh. *badh* feárr conn is caoimh chiall
nochar dáileadh do neoch riamh *badh* feárr conn ocus caoimh chiall.
it was not poured for anyone ever who was a better chief and a nobler intellect.

¹ This heading appears in L and M in identical wording, although the spelling varies in each. R has a variant in which *ro chan* has been abbreviated with the Latin .cc., which is crammed between the end of the previous lay and the beginning of the text as an afterthought. The consistent use of the older preverb suggests that the heading is older than LMR, which tend to replace *ro* with *do* throughout the text, despite preserving it here ; it is impossible to say whether it predates β. No headings are given to the lays nor to other verse in the text of the *Agallamh* in P.

5. Ubhall dearce oir ar a lár. go n-uaitheadbh-² d'aircead bhán
 Ubhall dearce-óir ar a lár, go n-úaitheadhaibh d'aircead bhán,
 An 'apple' of red-gold in its middle, with pillars of white silver,

mar no leathadh da taobh clí. ba hénglas úaidh in tuisccí
mar no leathadh dá taobh clí, ba hénglas úaidh in t-uisccí.
 As it was extended to its left side, single-streamed was the water from it.

6. A nuair no bhíodh don taobh deas. in t-ubholl cuanna caoimh dheas
 In uair no bhíodh don taobh deas, in t-ubholl cuanna caoimh-dheas.
 When it would be on the right side ; the dear, precious, lovely-shaped apple.

ro leicceadh an t-ubhall bán. an t-uisccí úadhe go h-iomlán
 ro leicceadh in t-ubhall bán in t-uisccí úadhe go h-iomlán.
 The apple would let the water from it completely.

7. Mo theisd ar úa Ronáin réidh. seach *gach* en laoch isin bhFhéin
 Mo theisd ar úa Rónáin réidh, seach *gach* én-laoch isin bhFhéin :
 My lauds on the grandson of Rónán the Steady, above every warrior in the Fian :

nochar thaisdil tír no tuinn. aonfhear *mar* chaoilte mac cruinn
 nochar thaisdil tír no tuinn, aon fhear *mar* Chaoilte mac Cruinn
 there did not traverse land or sea, a single man like Caoilte son of Cronn.

8. Ba h-occlaoch ba giolla gnáth. ba brúghaidh no bhiathadh cách
 Ba h-occlaoch, ba giolla gnáth ; ba brúghaidh no bhiathadh cách.
 A famous lad, a famous warrior was he ; he was a hosteller who would feed all.

ba treinfhear do chiorrbhach cath. ba laoch *ferdha* foruallach
 ba trein-fhear do chiorr-bhadh cath ; ba laoch feardha foruallach.
 He was a champion of cutting battalions ; he was a gallant warrior of mighty boasts.

(p. 384) 9. Dá madh ór croinn beatha búain. achd go bhfacbhadh caoifte crúaidh
 Dá madh ór croinn beatha búain, achd go bhfagbhadh Caoilte crúaidh ;
 If the innumerable trees of the eternal cosmos were gold, were it that tough Caoilte got it ;

as é glóir do bhíodh gun fhíor. ar chách *gur* chóir a sgaoileadh
 as é glóir do bhíodh 'gun fhíor : ar chách *gur* chóir a sgaoileadh.
 this is the boast the man would make : that it would be meet to distribute it to all.

10. Teannfadsa rem chroidhe *cruaidh*. an sithel naloinn nionnfhuair
 Teannfad-sa rem chroidhe *cruaidh* in Sítheal n-aloinn n-ionnfhuair,
 I shall press upon my hard heart the lovely cool Dipper,

truagh *nach* é caoilte ar ccara. atá sonn *mur* do rala
 truagh *nach* é Caoilte ar ccara, atá sonn *mur* do-rala.
 it is sad that it is not our friend Caoilte who is here, as it has happened.

11. Ansa agam ar Dhia ndil. a thailgin a thabhartaigh
 Ansa agam ar Dhia ndil, a Thailgin a thabhartaigh,
 By the dear Lord, it is hard for me, O generous Adze-head,

² Simply a faulty contraction, but LMR have created a dative singular in *-idh*. A (q. 4b) has the dat. pl.

go ninnsear³ dhuit mar dom tá. sgealaigheacht na sithealsá
 go n-innsear dhuit mar dom tá sgéalaigheacht na Síothla-sa.
 that I may tell thee how the tale of this Dipper afflicts me.

12. Lá do bhámar acc easrúaidh. fianna éreann iomdha slúaigh
 Lá do bhámar acc Eas Rúaidh Fianna Éreann iomdha slúaigh ;
 Once we, the Fianna of Erin, a great host, were at Eas Ruaidh ;

ro innis Fionn dúinne modh [gh]le. feadha foithre fasaighthe
 ro innis Fionn dúinne modh ghlé⁴ feadha foithre fasaighthe.
 Fionn enumerated clearly to us his ordering of wood, wilderness, wasteland.

13. Fionnchadh, corr cosslúath gan achd. gabhoidh sealcc chriche Connacht
 Fionnchadh, Corr, Cosslúath gan achd, gabhoidh sealcc chríche Connacht,
 Fionnchadh, Corr, Cossluath without flaw, get the hunt of the borders of Connaught,

faolchú seanach mac fir chruinn. cairbre is lughaidh a líatruim.
 Fáolchú, Seanach mac Fir Chruinn, Cairbre, 's Lughaidh a Líathdruim.⁵
 Faolchú, Seanach the son of Fear Cruinn, Cairbre, and Lughaidh from Leitrim.

14.^b Trí rí fhían mbreton gan ach. Anluan, forann, fearadhach
 Trí rígh Fhían mBreton gan achd : Ánluan, Forann, Fearadhach ;
 Three kings of the Fianna of Britain, without flaw : Anluan, Forann, Fearadhach ;

ionmhuin grinne sotal soin. trí meic iobhair angloinnaigh
 ionmhuin grinne sotal soin, trí meic Iobhair an-ghloinnaigh.
 dear was that proud troop, three sons of Iobhar of mighty deeds.

15. Faoiis forann seachoinn siar go dun ruis áruigh na ngiall
 Faoiis Forann seachoinn siar go dún Ruis Áruigh na ngiall
 Forann sent beyond us westward to the fort of Ros Aruigh of the gables

ionmhuin grinne ba glan gníomh. trí mic iobhair anairdrih
 ionmhuin grinne – ba glan ghníomh — trí mic Iobhair in áird-righ.
 a dear troop – it was a wondrous endeavour — three sons of Iobhar the high-king

16. Glaslaith is giollanraidh gnáth. leanuid forann uainn seach cach
 Glaslaith is Giollanraidh gnáth leanaid Forann úainn seach cách,
 Glaslaith and Giollanraidh the trustworthy follow Forann from us, moreover,

rucc mac rígh breton gongus. trian ar ndéoraidh sar n-amhus
 rucc mac rígh Breton go ngus⁶ trian ar ndéoraidh 's ar n-amhus.
 the son of the king of Britain with spirit took a third of our foreigners, and of our mercenaries.

³ The scribe has abbreviated with an unusual curled stroke through the tail of the *s*, unlike his usual suspensions. The scribe may be struggling with an earlier form of *ad-* or *in-fét* than those attested here, perhaps a form like *indsiub*. L *go n-inniseir*, M *go n-innsightheor*, R *go n-innisear*. These agree with A *go n-innisear*.

⁴ Potentially corrupted from *dúinn immaile*.

⁵ Other MSS omit the preposition *a*, but both are possible, since one may simply change the reading of the *is/s* to accommodate either. LMR have the standard spelling with *-dh-*, which P lacks.

⁶ LMR *na ngus*, but A *go ngus*. P is slightly smudged, but appears *gongus*, which is implausible in the context. It is possible that the archetype alpha is defective, but that P has intuited the original reading preserved in A, but beta has innovated.

17. Oirfidicch Finn féin *gan* fheircc. leanaid forann úainn seach cách⁷
 Oirfidigh Finn féin *gan* fheircc leanaid Forann lenaid ar a sheilcc.
 The minstrels of Fionn himself without anger follow Forann on the hunt.

rucc suanach rucc breasal bán. uallach aoifhear⁸ ailgenan
 rucc Súanach, rucc Breasal Bán, Uallach, Aoifhear, Ailgeanán.
 He took Suanach, he took Breasal Bán, Uallach, Aoifhear, Ailgenán.

18.^c Ciothruaidh, Cabhthach 7 cass. maine 7 éanna amhnus
 Ciothruaidh, Cobhthach ocus Cas, Maine is Éanna amhnus,
 Ciothruaidh, Cobhthach, and Cas, Maine, and excellent Éanna,

Cronnan, Criona, cháoin an modh. ceolach faoi 7 fosccadh
 Cronán, Criona, Cháoin in modh, Ceolach, Faoi ocus Fosccadh,
 Cronán, Criona, Chaoin the honourable, Ceolach, Faoi, and Fosgadh

(p. 385) 19. Dar an righ do ordaigh sin. an laoch rucc uadha⁹ an aiscidh sin
 Dar in rígh do h-órdaigh sin, in laoch rucc in aiscidh sin
 The king who ordered that said, the warrior who took that present

do bhféarr leis no ar thairchill grían. déoradh airfidigh doighréir
 do bhféarr leis no ar thairchill grían : déoradh airfidigh d'óighriar.¹⁰
 would prefer it to all the sun encompassed : foreigners, musicians for compensation.

20. Gabhoitt tnuth an fhíann an soin. re mac righ breaton buidhnigh
 Gabhaitt tnúth in Fhíann in soin, re mac rígh Breatan buidhnigh :
 Indignation seizes the Fian after that, at the son of the king of Britain of warlords :

ba h-éadh leo a rucc-san lais. déoraidh airfidigh amhuis
 ba h-eadh leó a rucc-san lais : déoraidh, airfidigh, amhuis.
 Important to them was all that he took : foreigners, musicians, mercenaries.

21. As soin adubhairt fionn. gen gor iarrois iad dar liom
 As ann¹¹ soin adubhairt Fionn, gan gor iarrois iad dar liom,
 Thus Fionn spoke, 'Although thou askedest not for them, meseems,

beir leat a oisín male. cnú dheireoil 7 daighre
 beir leat, a Oisín, 'mmaile Cnú Dheireoil ocus Daighre.
 take with thee, accompanying thee, O Oisín, Cnú Dhereoil and Daighre.

22. Os tusa as féarr eineach úainn. a oisín ar flaith an t-shluaigh
 Ós tusa as fearr eineach úainn, a Oisín, 'ar flaith in t-sluaigh,
 As thou art most reputable amongst us, O Oisín, 'quoth the lord of the host,

⁷ P has a marginal note *air a sheilcc*, sloppily and hastily written. LM *lenaid Forann ar a sheilg* is in concord with the tradition of A, whereas the reading in the body of P is a copyist's error, repeating 15b.

⁸ The MS suspension is unclear. R has a marginal note of *vel aonfhear*, which is also a possible expansion of the word as it appears in P. The deciding factor is the reading of A. It seems likely that the archetype of the recension may have been illegible at this point.

⁹ *Uadha* is not present in the other MSS ; its inclusion in P makes the line hypersyllabic.

¹⁰ OG *ógríar*, the emendation of case form restores rhyme.

¹¹ Emendatio NiS.

as riot as cuibhdhe go mbloidh. *deoraidh* amhuis ar th'ionchaibh
 'as riot as cuibhdhe go mbloidh *déoraidh*, amhuis ar th'ionchaibh.
 'it is most fitting for thee famously to have foreigners, mercenaries in thy protection.

23. Déna sealcc laighen na leann. is osraighe na liathreann
 Déna sealcc Laighean na leann is Osraighe na liath reann ;
 Do thou the hunt of Laighean of the blades and of Osraighe of grey spearpoints ;

rod fia *gach* maith ar aon ris. *beir mairfidigh beir* mamhuis
 rod fia *gach* maith ar aon ris : *beir m'airfidigh beir m'amhuis*.
 thou shalt have every good man all together : take my musicians, take my mercenaries.

24. Toirbeirimsi teora Pócc. do mac riogh breaton na rod
 Toirbeirim-si teóra pocc do mac ríogh Breatan na ród ;
 I surrender three bucks for the son of the king of Britain of the spirited deeds ;

misi 7 forann rer lá. *badh* faoilidh ar naiccenta
 misi ocus Forann rer lá *badh* faoilidh ar n-aiccenta.
 Forann and I, in our day, glad were our spirits.

25. Dénadh mo ghnaith fhían go fíor. sealcc midhe talchóir *gan* fhíoch
 Dénadh¹² mo ghnaith Fhían go fíor sealcc Midhe thalchoir *gan* fhíoch,
 Let my wanted Fian do the chase of violent Midhe without a fight,

o tá drobhaois go roich muir. ulltaigh 7 aradhuigh
 o tá Drobhaois go roich muir Ulltaigh ocus Aradhuigh.
 whence is the Drobhaois unto the sea, Uladh and [Dal] Aradhaigh.

26. Da chuicceadh mumhan *gan* mheircc. leicceam seachoinn sin *gan* seilcc
 Dá chúicceadh Mumhan *gan* mheircc : léicceam seachainn sin *gan* seilcc ;
 The two provinces of Mumhu without reproach : we pass over them without a chase ;

Ní forail *gombadh* habuidh. *deoraidh* 7 as¹³ uiradhaigh
 ní foráil go mbadh h-abaidh : *déoraidh* ocus Aradhaigh.'
 it was not a trifle that they were ready : mercenaries and men of [Dál] Aradhaigh.'

27. Suidhidhsíomh fein imbéarnois. fionn da ttuocsam tighearnas
 Suidhidh-síomh féin i mBearnois Fionn dá ttuocsam tighearnas ;
 He sat himself in Bearnois, Fionn to whom we gave lordship ;

sgaoílid úadh alucht sealcca. Cona cconuibh croibhdhearcca
 sgaoílidh úadh a lucht sealcca cona cconuibh croibh-dhearcca.
 he sends from him his huntsmen with red-pawed hounds.

(p. 386) 28. Ochtar i bhfarradh in ríogh. doccbhaidh nach isligheadh gníomh
 Ochtar i bhfarradh in ríogh d'óccbhaidh nach ísligheadh gníomh ;
 An octet in the company of the king of young warriors whom deeds did not humble ;

¹² LMR *dénam*, an older form suggests β may have had the first person plural. It is unclear which MS has innovated. The quatrain is not found in A.

¹³ P has marked these letters with puncta ; P could not evidently read his archetype, as it is evidently not a mistake, and a monosyllable is required by the verse. L *ocus uir adhaigh*, R *â uirraidhaigh*, M *agas urradhaigh*. One may suspect the *ocus* has been written twice in Alpha as a copyist's error, once abbreviated, once written, or else that the intention was *is* plus the preposition *a*, 'even from Dál Aradhaigh.'

é *badh* dhéin an naoimadh fear. fionn mac cumhoill an caoimhfhear
 é badhdhéin in náoimhadh fear, Fionn mac Cumhoill in caoimh-fhear.
 he himself was the ninth man, Fionn Mac Cumhaill the nobleman.

29. Aodh becc is rindolbh go rinn. fál is cúan o chruimghlinn
 Áodh becc is Rindolbh go rinn Fál agus Cúan ó Chruim-ghlinn, (.1.)¹⁴
 Little Aodh and Rindolbh the keen, Fal and Cuan from Cruim-ghleann,

glas mac gaoidhil garbh aghus. caoince, daire 7 donnghas
 Glas mac Gaoídhil garbh a ghus Caoínche, Dáire agus donnghas.
 Glas son of Gaedhil, fierce his ardour, Caoínche, Daire, and Donnghus.

30. Cú ar éill gach fir dhíobh sin. fionn is bran ar a bhéalaibh
 Cú ar éill gach fir dhíobh sin : Fionn is Bran ar a bhéalaibh ;
 A hound on the leash of every one of those men : Fionn and Bran before him ;

ansa accam ar am tá. go sloinntear ananmanna
 †ansa¹⁵ accam ar am tá,† go sloinntear a n-anmanna.
 it is hard for me, what awaits me : that their names be told.

31. Fuilteach acc aodh mbecc mac finn. echtach acc rindolbh go rinn
 Fuilteach acc Aodh mbecc mac Finn, Échtach acc Rindolbh go rinn ;
 Little Aodh son of Fionn, had Fuilteach ; Rindolbh had Echtach the keen ;

Fearglinne acc fál imale. gáoth acc cúan cromghlinne
 Fearglinne acc Fál 'mmale, Gáoth acc Cúan Cruim-ghlinne.
 Fál had Fearglinne with him ; Cuan of Cuan of Cruim-ghleann had Gaoth.

32. Aithim acc glas garcc aghráin. fiamhach cú caoinche comhlain
 Aithim acc Glas – garcc a ghráin, Fiamhach cú Caoínche comhláin.
 Glas – fierce his spearpoint – had Aithim ; Fiamhach [was] hound of perfect Caoínche ;

Fearghlonn acc daire re la. fearbaoth illaimh dannghosa
 Fearghlonn acc Dáire ré lá, Fear Báoth i láimh Dhanngghosa.
 Dáire had Fearghlonn that day ; Fear Baoth [was] at the hand of Donnghus.

33. Bran *gidh* bha q nirsad q. maith agaisceadh caoimh aclu
 Bran *gidh* bha¹⁶ cú, níorsad cú ; maith a gaisceadh,¹⁷ caoimh a clú.
 Bran, though a hound, was no hound ; great was his nobility, glorious his valour.

nír mac con nir chin ó choin. nir chuimpirt con amathair
 Níor mac con ; nír chin ó choin : níor chuimpirt con a mathair.
He was no offspring of hounds ; not from dog-kind : his mother was not a hound's progeny.

¹⁴ Cf. A q. 25, which scans properly with the names in a different ordering.

¹⁵ L *Anso*, M *Ann so*, R *Ansa* but with an *n*-stroke added then overscored. The confusion of M suggests a fault in *α*. A q. 26c appears more convincing.

¹⁶ This as an early phrasing. NiS reads *géarbha*, perhaps by comparing to A, although the suspension is the one which the scribe uses for vowel and lenited consonant and not the *-er* stroke.

¹⁷ *Cú*, an old masculine, after a time in flux stabilised in the modern period as a feminine. There is the tension here between the grammatical gender of the noun and Bran's physical gender. The possessive pronoun is given as feminine, agreeing with *cú* rather than *Bran* ; the practice here adopted is to leave the geminating feminine particles as they appear, but to translate them as though masculine, the natural grammatical gender of 'hound' in English. Cf. n. 8 to the edition of SCA.

34. Ní deacha bran ar choin ríamh. *badh b¹⁸ maith* a conn is a cíall
 Ní dheacha Bran ar choin ríamh ; *badh maith* a conn is a cíall ;
 Bran never went on a hound ever ; good were his wits and his reason ;

níor chóir cu do rádha ré. *mac rígh dhal aruidhe*
 níor chóir cú do rádha ré *mac ríogh Dhál Araidhe*.
 it was not befitting to call him a hound : the son of the king of Dál Araidhe.

35. Gairidh bador ar an árd. *mun bhflaithfheinnidh bhfaobar dearg*
 Gairidh bhádar ar in árd, *mun bhflaith-fheinnidh bhfaobhar dearg*,¹⁹
 Shouts were on the height, around the lord of the Fiana of the bloody blades,

cco bhfacatar an muic móir. *nuathmhar nanaidhnidh ndithmhoir*
cco bhfacatar in muic móir *n-úathmhair n-anaithnidh n-díthmhoir*.
 and they saw the huge pig, dreadful, unspeakable, destructive.

36. As amloidh tanoicc an torc. *ba samhalta re gach nolc*
 As amhlóidh tánoicc in torc : *ba samhalta re gach n-olc* ;
 It is thus that the boar came : it was like unto every evil ;

nír mhó chnoc sléibhe ina sé. *go maoil duibhghuirm deimhsidhe*
 nír mhó chnoc-sléibhe iná sé, *go maoil duibh-ghuirm deimhsidhe*.²⁰
 not greater was the height of a mountain summit than he, to a bald dark-blue pate.

37. Léccoid uathuibh anochd ccoin. *gus an ttorc mhór ar an moigh*
 Léiccoid úathuibh a n-ochd ccoin *gus in ttorc mhór ar in maigh* ;
 They loose from them their eight hounds to the boar on the plain ;

*iompais ríu badh comhlann cruaidh*²¹. *marbhus iad uile anaonuir*
iompáis ríu : badh comhlann cruaidh ; marbhuis iad uile i n-aon-uair.
 He turned to them : it was a cruel contest ; he slew them all at once.

(p. 387) 38. Éirccoid in tochtar glan garcc. *ar marbhadh accon cceannard*
 Éirghid in t-ocht ar glan garcc *ar marbhadh a ccon cceann-árd*,
 The bright, fierce octet rose after the slaughter of their high-headed hounds,

7 seolaidh sleacch gach fir. *ar an torc naluinn nalluidh*
 ocus seolaid sleagh gach fír *ar in torc n-áluinn n-alluidh*.
 and they direct each man's spear after the splendid wild boar.

39. Ro sginnsead na sleagha dhe. *mur ba do chairthe claiche*
 Ro sginnsead na sleagha dhe *mur ba do chairthe claiche*.
 The spears glanced off him as though it were off a pillar of stone.

iompais riú brisidh uile. na hochd sleaccha snasbhuidhe
iompáis riú ; brisidh uile, na h-ocht sleagha snas-bhuidhe.
he turned to them ; he breaks them all, the eight golden spears.

¹⁸ The scribe has doubled the contracted copula. The second is marked with a *punctum delens*, which may not be the scribe's own correction.

¹⁹ The reading *dearg* is quite clear, but odd. The A reading of *garg* makes far more sense, but is alien to all MSS of the α textual tradition.

²⁰ LM *d'omsídhe* (unintelligible), R overwritten and illegible. Likely from OG *deimes*.

²¹ The scribe has written *ten*, underscored it, then written *c^uaidh* above it.

40. Anos úair na ngothann mór. abhrain adeir riot an slógh
 [Fionn:] 'Anois úair na ngothann mór a Bhraín, adeir riot in slógh.
 [Fionn:]²² 'Now is the time of the great boasts, O Bran, Tell the host with thee

gealladh úait nach ticcfadh trá. fiadh no torc nach dingeabhtha
 gealladh úait nach ttiuccfadh trá fiadh no torc nach dingéabhthá.
 an oath by thee, that there not come past, deer or boar that thou wouldst not crush.'

41. Éirccis fionn 7 gebhis bran 7 crithais an slabhraidh
 Éirghis Fionn is gabhais Bran, ocus crothais in slabhraidh
 Fionn arose and took Bran, and he shook the chain

agos tuimish di re alá a héachda a heasbadha
 agus tuirmhis²³ dí ré a lá a h-éachda a h-easbadha.
 and he enumerated to him in time his exploits, his depredations.

42. Nochar mhó an torc uccad dar liom. ina an torc ba marbh san nglionn
 [Fionn:] 'Nochar mhó in torc uccad²⁴ dar liom, ina in torc rob marbh san nglionn,²⁵
 [Fionn:] 'Not bigger is the boar yonder, meseems, than the boar which was dead in the glen,

do rochair leat immale. eidir eabha is Ro nGéde²⁶
 do-rochair leat immale eidir Eabha and Ros nGédhe.
 which fell by thy hand between Eabha and Ros nGédhe.

43. Ger bhadhbhaidh²⁷ torc Droma an Eoin. maith ro chuiris é da thréoir
 Ger bhadhbhaidh torc Droma in Eoin, maith ro chuiris é dá thréoir
 Although deadly was the boar of Druim an Eoin, well thou didst put him from his strength,

torc cluána leamh choille ar lear. is torc droma lighean
 torc cluana Leamh-Choille ar lear is torc Droma Lighean
 a boar of the meadow of the Leamh-Choll by the sea and a boar of Druim Lighean.

²² In A, this is part of a longer challenge by Oisín to Fionn and Bran. Here, it is shortened and modified in such a way that the speaker is unclear, but more likely Fionn.

²³ P has a scribal slip ; emend with LMR *tuirmhis*.

²⁴ Emendatio NiS *úccad*. She reads a fada which the present author does not see at all, and uses it for her search for a meaning other than the obvious.

²⁵ LR *no an torc rob marbh san nglionn*, M id., v. *ro marbh*. A *in torc ro mharbhus sa ghlionn*. P is ungrammatical.

²⁶ P is unclear ; it is written with an enormous stroke over the G, either as a general expansion or as an n, probably written thus in the archetype α, for LMR have made nonmetrical expansions: L *ro ghannaidhe*, M *ro ghanaidhe*, R *roganedhc*. The use of an n-stroke for eclipsis of g is not found elsewhere in the lay. The reading of A, *Ros nGedhe*, is necessary for sense to be made of the place name. Alpha, therefore, must have made a copyist's error, leaving out -s n- and used the contraction to shew the missing n. P has reproduced thus it with spacing, but LMR have misunderstood. In the list of names through the next few quatrains, there is considerable variation in the names, for some of them have not been recognised, carrying archaic spellings or corruptions from incorrect expansions, or modernised, or substituted with metrically similar names.

²⁷ OG *badhbha* ; alternate forms with a dental stem are found in DIL. NiS *Gérbh adhbhal*, but the suspension clearly indicates a lenited consonant, and is not the general suspension.

44. Torc cream choille taoith dotghuin. torc boirche torc ruis áruigh
 Torc Creamh-Choille taoith dot ghuin, torc Boirche torc Ruis Áruigh,
 The boar of Creamh-Choill which gored thee fell, the boar of Boirche, the boar of Ros Áruigh,

torc cinn feabhraid torc muine. naoi ttuirc uamha sneachtuidhe
 torc Cinn Fheabhraid torc Muine, naoi ttuirc uamha Sneachtuidhe
 the boar of Ceann Fheabhraid, the boar of Muine, nine boars of the cave of Sneachtuidh.

45. Do mhárbhuis torc acc áth néid. ris ar ghabh *gráin* uile an bhféin
 Do mharbhuis torc acc Áth Néid, ris ar ghabh *gráin* uile in bhFéin,
 Thou didst kill a boar at Áth Néid, concerning which, horror had seized the whole Fian,

torc cnámh choille torc clochoir. 7 torc chnuic os lochuipheir
 torc Cnámh Choille, torc Clochoir, agus torc chnuic ós Loch Uipheir.
 the boar of Cnámh Choille, the boar of Clochar, and a boar of the hill above Loch Uipheir.

46. Do mharbhais torc acc ath lúain. 7 naoi ttuirc acc ath Lúain
 Do mharbhais torc acc Áth Lúain, agus naoi ttuirc acc Áth Cuain,²⁸
 Thou didst kill a boar at Áth Luain, and nine boars at Áth Cuain,

torc muighe glinne is mór ainm. torc fionnabhrach torc fionn chainn
 torc Muighe Glinne – 's mór ainm, torc Fionn-abhrach torc Finn-chainn.
 a boar of Magh Glinne – the fame is great, the boar of Fionn-abhair, the boar of Fionn-chainn.

(p. 388) 47. Aireamh do bhrigh is do bhladh. lia alíon no an úathadh
 Aireamh do bhrigh is do bhladh : lia a líon nó a n-úathadh,
 An enumeration of thy strength and of thy fame : more their numbers than their fewness,

ó do cuireadh coiníall ort. gos anionbhaidhsi attaoi nochd
 ó do cuireadh coin-íall ort, gus in ionbhaidh-si attaoí 'nochd.'
 since a hound-leash was put upon thee, until the time thou art to-night.'

48. Do éiricbh bran lán da feircc. is cumsgaighis uile an leircc
 Do éirigh Bran lán dá feircc, is comh-sgaighis²⁹ uile in leircc ;
 Bran arose full of his fury and such that he shook all the slope ;

teichidh an torc tar shliabh soir. ot *conairc* anionnsaicchidh
 teichidh in torc tar sliabh soir, ó't-conairc a n-ionnsaighidh
 the boar flees eastwards over the mountain, when he saw their attack.

49. Fada an rúaicc o bearnois mhóir. go gleann teichidh soir *gan* .én.³⁰
 Fada in rúaicc ó Bearnois mhóir go Ghleann Teichidh soir gan sóidh.³¹
 Far the pursuit from great Bearnas to Gleann Teichidh eastwards without turning.

²⁸ *Áth Cúain* LMR. What has been here read as *Búain* by NiS, is a scribal slip of a repeat of *Lúain* with the left serif of *u* touching the initial *l*.

²⁹ *L sgaigheas, M scaidheas, R scaighes. OI con-oscaigi.*

³⁰ In marg., noting a missing syllable, not a reading, although NiS read *gan e*[...].

³¹ *M gan sodh, L gan sódh, R gan sódh* but with the *s* made from an altered *u*, shewing the scribe's uncertainty. The fault in P and the uncertainty of R suggest a poor reading in α. A has at q. 46b *a sloighthi slóigh*. The majority reading of the recension has been adopted. It must be noted, however, that the broad accusative that is classically prescribed does not rhyme (*IGT* § 96), but the slender accusative needed here is proscribed.

mar ar fhashtaigh bran an torc. mur a bhfuair fionn adhbhadh olc
 mar ar fhashtaigh Bran in torc, mur a bhfuair Fionn fadhbhadh³² olc.
 as Bran restrained the boar, just when Fionn had gotten a bad thrashing.

50. Seasais bran gabhus a chluas. 7 sgaras ris a núas.
 Seasais Bran gabhuis a chluas, agus sgarais ris a-núas ;
 Bran halted, seized his ear, and he escaped from him from above ;

conmhaigh fionn an ccluas aile. baoi an torc na mór sheasamh
 conmhaidh³³ Fionn in ccluas aile — baoí in torc 'na mór-sheasamh.³⁴
 Fionn clings to the other ear — the boar was rearing upright.

51. Léiccis an torc sgreich na ceann. 7 ro chlosim in ghleann
 Léiccis in torc sgréich na ceann, agus ro chlosam in ghleann
 The boar gave a great squeal from his head, and we heard it around the glen.

tanoicc as an ccnoc na dhail. aitheach an aithnidh an-bhál
 Tánoicc as in ccnoc 'na dháil aitheach an-athnuidh³⁵ an-bháil.
 There came from the hill to meet him a mis-shapen churl of great strength.

52. Adobhairt aitheach an chnuic. léiccidh uaibh dhamhsa an muic
 Adubhairt aitheach in chnuic, 'léiccidh uaibh dhamh-sa in muic :
 The churl of the hill said, 'loose from you the pig to me :

no beithi in dáil deabhtha dhe. fa dháigh marbhtha na muice³⁶
 no beithi i ndáil deabhtha dhe fá dháigh marbhtha na muice.'
 Or ye will be in a contentious meeting for it, on account of killing the pig.'

53. Ro chuala rindolbh go rinn. ro chuala aodh becc mac finn
 Ro chuala Rindolbh go rinn ; ro chuala Aodh becc mac Finn
 Rindolbh the keen heard ; little Aodh, son of Fionn heard.

ro chuala daire go ngus. ro chuala daighre 7 donngus.
 ro chuala Dáire go ngus ; ro chuala Daighre 's Donnghus.
 The spirited Dáire heard ; Daighre and Donnghus heard.

54. Eircchid an ceathror glan garcc. gos an aitheach naith nionard
 Éirghid in ceathror glan garcc, gus in aitheach n-áith n-iom-árd
 The quartet rise, fit and fierce, against the keen, towering churl.

ceanglas an taitheach iad soin gan neart sgeith gan cruais claidhiomh
 ceanglas in t-aitheach iad-soin gan neart sgéith, gan cruais claidhiomh.
 the churl bound them without strength of shield, without hardihood of sword.

³² LR *adhbhal*, M *adhbhar*. (A *tromolc*.) P's contraction is his usual stroke for vowel plus lenited consonant ; *fadhbhadh*, 'thrashing' is also noted by Dinneen to occur without *f*.

³³ OG *con-gaib* yields MI *congmhaidh*.

³⁴ Scribes NiS ina, but without indicating *i* as an addition. LMR *an mór fhoraoise*, in a great thicket/lair.

³⁵ LM *adhnuidhe*, R *athnaithnigh* 'mis-shapen'. A *adhéitigh*, 'very horrible'. P as it stands reads 'completely unknown'. Whilst it is not possible to select the archetypal reading with certainty from amongst these possibilities, the meaning is certain ; The form found in LM, the MSS closest to P, is the best reading.

³⁶ Emendatio in marg. The main text, which is underlined, reads *fo dháil dearbhtha na muice*.

55. Do chuala caoince mac finn. 7 glass an ghaisccidh ghrinn
Do-chuala Caoínche mac Finn, is Glas in ghaisccidh ghrinn ;
Caoince son of Finn heard, and Glas of the keen arms ;

do chúala fál immale. 7 cúaan croimghlinne³⁷
do-chuala Fál immale, ocus Cúan Cruim-ghlinne.
Fál heard after him, and Cuan of Cruim-ghleann.

56. Ceanglas an taitheach iar núair. an tochdar laoch go lán bhuaidh
Ceanglais in t-aitheach iar n-úair in t-ochdar laoch go lán-bhuaidh ;
The churl then bound the octet of warriors fully victoriously ;

(p. 389) ro chuir irisíonnta so. ros thóc ar learcc a dhroma
ro chuir irisíonnta so ; ros thóc ar learcc a dhroma.
he put a strap upon them ; he lifted them onto the slope of his back.

57. Fionn bran 7 a torc. cionn ar chionn o chnoc do chnoc
Fionn, Bran ocus a torc³⁸ cionn ar chionn ó chnoc do chnoc ;
Fionn, Bran and his boar head over head from hill to hill ;

nír chuimhgheadar ní dhó dhe. nír ghabh arm nír loiscc teine
níor choimhgheadar ní dhó dhe ; níor ghabh arm, níor loiscc teine.
they attained nought from him for it ; no weapon captured him, no fire scorched him.

58. Gabus an taitheach ar dhruim. an torc gur chuir re a ghúaloinn
Gabhuis in t-aitheach ar dhruim in torc gur chuir re a ghualoinn ;
The churl proceeded to take by the back the boar, so that he put it upon his shoulder ;

ní raibh acc fionn socc bran de. achd a bhfeaghoinn da neisi
ní raibh' acc Fionn 's acc Bran de, achd a bhfeaghoinn dá n-éisi.
there was nothing for Fionn and Bran from it, save their beholding his track.

59. Geis is gadh is ain cheim ort. muna leana tú do thorc
[Aitheach:] 'Geis is gádh is ain-cheim ort, muna leana tú do thorc :
[Churl:] 'A spell and hardship and dire downfall upon thee, unless thou pursue thy boar :

ni maith suarraighe re seilcc a fhinn mic qmhoill airm dheircc
ní maith suaraighe re seilcc, a Fhinn mhic Cumhaill airm-dheircc.
Trifling is not good on a hunt, O Fionn Mac Cumhaill of the bloody weapons.

60. Béid fo gheasuiph cuid dot fhéin. muna leana do sheilcc féin
Béid fo gheasuibh cuid do t'Fhéin. muna leana do sheilcc féin ;
They shall be under spells, a portion of thy Fian, unless thou pursue thine own chase ;

bíaidh fo gheasuibh bran búadhach. in cú áluinn iolbhúadhach
bíaidh fó gheasuibh Bran búadhach, in cú áluinn iol-bhuadhach.'
precious Bran shall be under spells, the beautiful hound of many virtues.'

³⁷ The *ocus* is written with the abbreviation, but the line has a minor textual problem of an extra 'a' in Cuan's name ; the expansion is dependent on several possible reconstructions. It may be assumed that it results from a slip ; but it is uncertain whether it is a repetition, conflation of the article into a name ending in *-an* (as the name appears as *Cúan Crom Glinne* in 30d supra), or another word, as LM demonstrate : *Agus Cúan caoin cruimlinne*. R is simplest & *Cúan chruimghlinne*. A is like it : *Cúan cruimghlinde*.

³⁸ NiS *a'*, read as the article. Note that the feminine, in agreement with the noun *cú*, has been following Bran throughout the lay.

61. Do racchainnsi leat ar fionn da bhfacchbhainn comhaidh da chionn
'Do raghainn-si leat,' ar Fionn, 'dá bhfaghbhainn comhaidh dá chionn :
'I would go with thee,' quoth Fionn, 'if I would get a favour in return :

madh da léiccthea leam *gan* achd. mochtar laoch im choimhideachd
madh dá léicctheá leam *gan* achd m'ocht ar laoch im choimhideachd.'
if thou wert to loose unto me without condition my octet of warriors in my retinue.'

62. Beirsi beannachdoin leo soin. amhic cumhaill ahalmhoin
[Aitheach:] 'Beir-si beannachdoin leó soin, a mhic Cumhaill a h-Almhoin :
[Churl:] 'Take thou a blessing with them, O Mac Cumhaill from Almhain :

rod fíá uaim aisccidh oile. noch a nasccoid miodhlaighe
rod fíá uaim ascaidh oile ; noch a n-ascaidh miodhlaighe.'
another request shall be thine from me ; it is no cowardly demand.'

63. Sgaoilidh an taitheach gér chruaidh. don ochdar laoch go lanbhuidh
Sgaoilidh in t-aitheach gér chruaidh don ochdar laoch go lán-bhúaidh,
The churl unbinds, although with difficulty, the octet of warriors fully victoriously,

7 do chuadorson lais. gus ansidh os gleann deirccdheis
ocus do chuadar-san lais gus in sídh ós Gleann Deircc-dheis.
and they repair with him to the *sídh* over Gleann Deirgdheis.

64. A nuair ranccatarsan doras. tucc aníar fleiscc *gan* chonas
In uair ránccatar-san doras, tucc an-íar fleiscc *gan* chonas
When they had reached the door, he took out a wand without ill intent

7 tucc buille don torc go rath. gur bhócclaoch in aoidheadhach
's tucc buille don torc go rath, gurbh ócclaoch in daoidh-athach.³⁹
and he gave a stroke to the boar effectually, that the monster was a young warrior.

(p. 390) 65. Tucc buille oile dho féin. ocus nochar mheasa réim
Tucc buille oile dhó féin, ocus nochar mheasa réim,
He gave another stroke to himself, and the outcome was not the worse meseems,

go lasfadh gaoth 7 grían. don fhiorfhorusda fhior fhíal
go lasfadh gaoth ocus grían. don fhíor fhorusda fhír-fhíal.
inasmuch as wind and sun would shine for the steadfast man, the warm-hearted man.

66. Mar do chuador isin sídh. fuaradar fáilte *gan* fhíoch
Mar do chuadar isin sídh, fuaradar fáilte *gan* fhíoch ;
As they repaired into the *sídh*, they received a welcome without ill-will ;

cuirther íad nasuidhe. ar cholbhadhuibh gloinidhe
Cuirther iad 'na suidhe ar cholbha⁴⁰ gloinidhe.
they were seated upon bright couches.

67. Tanoicc caocca giolla nócc. orra isteagh do thoirbhairt pócc
Tánoicc caocca giolla n-ócc orra isteagh do thoirbeirt pócc ;
Fifty young lads came in to them to give them kisses ;

³⁹L *daoidheadhach*, M *daoi athach*, R *daoidh athach*,

⁴⁰P has stuck the dative plural ending onto the end of the accusative plural. LR confirm it with spelling variants of the accusative *colbha*. M is corrupt.

do ríachd ina ndiáigh linibh snas. caocca sgolocc fionn foltchass
do ríachd 'na ndiáigh línibh⁴¹ snas caocca sgolocc fionn foltchas.
there came after them in proper number fifty scholars with curly white locks.

68. 3.la. bean bhrat núaine. ticc isteagh ba bladh búaidhe
Trí chaocca bean bhrat n-úaine ticc isteagh – ba bladh buaidhe ;
Thrice fifty green-robed ladies come inside – the excellences were a glory ;

suidhid gach bean díbh imale. i bhfarradh a caoimh chéile
suidhidh gach bean díbh 'male i bhfarradh a caoimh chéile.
each lady of them then sits near to her dear companion.

69. Ríoghan na suidhe isticch thall. ba háille don chineadh chlann
Ríoghan 'na suidhe istigh thall ba h-áille don chineadh chlann,
A Queen sitting down across the room, the greatest beauty of humankind,

feruis fáilte fris in rígh. re mac cumoill Ailmhuiní
feruis fáilte fris in rígh, re Mac Cumhaill Almhuiní.
poured a welcome to the king, to MacCumhaill of Almhain.

70. Asda ro hasaoideadh dháil. ahochd sithlaibh airccid bháin
Asda ro h-asaoideadh dháil, a h-ochd síthlaibh airccid bháin,
serving was brought forth from them, from eight dippers of white silver,

7 sitheal cumhdaigh óir. dfhionn mac cumhaill mic tréinmhóir
ocus Sítheal cumhdaigh óir d'Fhionn mac Cumhaill mhic Tréanmhóir.
and a Dipper of gilt of covering of gold for Fionn son of Cumhall son of Tréanmhór.

71. Núa gach mbidh sean gach dicche. tuccadh do luchd an tighe
Núa gach mbídh, sean gach dighe tuccadh do luchd in tighe ;
The new of every food, the old of every drink was brought to the people of the house ;

fuadar airfideachd áin. mar áon is gaoíne comhróidh
fuadar airfideachd áin, mar áon is gaoine comhróidh.
they received pleasant music, likewise the best of conversation.

72. IN úair ro ghabh meascca cách. IS ann ad beart an tócclaoch
In úair ro ghabh meascca cách, is ann ad-bheart in t-ócclaoch,
When drunkenness seized them all, it was then the young warrior said,

cred anos atá ar haire. a mhic cumhoill Almhuiní
'cred anois atá ar th'aire, a mhic cumhoill Almhuiní?'
'What is upon thy mind, O Mac Cumhaill of Almhain?'

73. IS eadh atá ar mhaire ar fionn. o taoisi ga labhra riom
'Is eadh atá ar mh'aire,' ar Fionn, 'ó taoi-si 'ga labhra riom,
'This is what is on my mind,' quoth Fionn, 'since thou art mentioning it to me,

cia sibhsi amhuinntear mheanmnach. do chinn ar gach caoimh theaghlach
cia sibh-si, a mhuinntear mheanmnach, do chinn ar gach caoimh theaghlach?'
who are ye, spirited folk, who have grown above every fair household?'

⁴¹ This independent dative is a sign of antiquity, but it may be a corruption, as A reads *milibh* (although the sense of the line is different there), and these words are a series of easily confused minims. LM *leibh*, R *leibh* take it to mean children. The likelihood of P being reflective of the reading in Ω is high ; *brat n-úaine* in 67a is of the same construction. The prose SC makes a confusion with *léine*, 'shirt.'

(p. 391) 74. Enan mac labhair tuinne. mainmsi is mé an laoch go luinne
'Eaná mac Labhair Tuinne m'ainm-si ; is mé in laoch go luinne ;
'Eaná, son of Labhar Tuinne, is my name ; I am a warrior gladly ;

croifhionn mo bheann chaoimh gan chrádh. inghean mhíngheal Mhanannáin
Croifhionn mo bheann chaoimh gan chrádh inghean mhín-gheal Mhanannáin
Croifhionn is my dear wife without pain, delicate daughter of Manannán.

75. A seadh fil dar ccloinn gan achd. aon inghean 7 aon mac
A seadh fil d'ar ccloinn gan achd : aon-inghean agus aon-mhac ;
These are our children without fault : one daughter and one son ;

uathach an mac glan alí. Sgathach ainm na hinghiní
Uathach in mac, glan a lí ; Sgáthach ainm na h-inghiní.
Uathach is the son, bright his countenance ; Sgáthach is the name of the daughter.'

76. An ghein ad chiamoide dhíbh. samolta aéccosg frí rígh
[Fionn:] 'In ghein ad-chíamoide-ne dhíbh, samholta a h-éccosg fri rígh ;
[Fionn:] 'The offspring which we see of those, like is his appearance to a king's ;

da bhfaicmaois in inghean náin. do bhéarmaois atuarasgbháil
dá bhfaicmaois in inghean n-áin, do-bhéarmaois a tuarasgbháil.'
if we saw the splendid daughter, we could give her description.'

77. Inn sin tucadh isin teach. Sgathach anaindir uicht gheal
Inn sin tucadh isin teach : Sgáthach in aindir uicht-gheal ;
Then she was brought into the hall : Sgáthach the white-breasted maiden ;

rucc buaidh ndealbha 7 ndruine. do mnaibh talmhuin tonn bhuidhe
rucc buaidh ndealbha is ndruinne do mnáibh talmhuin tonn-bhuidhe.
she surpassed in complexion and form the women of the yellow-surfaced world.

78. Líonus a searc ní fáth foill. fionn mac qmhoill mic tréinmhóir
Líonus a searc – ní fáth fóill — Fionn mac Cumhaill mhic Tréanmhóir
Love of her filled – not slothful the motivation — Fionn son of Cumhall son of Tréanmhór

tarccaidh dhi .c. do gach crodh. da thabhairt a ttuarusdal
tarccaidh dhi céad do gach crodh dá thabhairt i ttuarusdal
he offered her an hundred of every livestock to be taken for a brideprice.

79. Tarccaidh da bhrathoir go mbúaidh. scíath is cloidhimh díolta shlúaiigh
Tarccaidh dá bhrathoir go mbúaidh scíath is cloidhiomh díolta shlúaiigh ;
He offered her victorious brother shield and sword of hired hosts ;

tarccaidh dhi ina coibhche thrá. céad uinge dór órlasta
tarccaidh dhi ina coibhche thrá céad uinge d'ór orlasta.
he offered as her bride-price then an hundred ounces of pure gold.

80. Créd lat súd ar ahathoir. abhean nar fhaom anachoin
'Créd lat súd,' ar a h-athair, 'a bhean nár fhaom an-fhachoin ;
'How is that with thee,' quoth her father, 'O Lady who consented not to wrongdoing ;

ciodh maith bean ní headh is féarr. a tocmhairc tar achoimhtheann
ciodh maith bean ní h-éadh is fearr a tocmhairc tar a choimh-theann.¹⁴²
although a wife is a good thing, it is best not to woo her through forcing her.'

¹⁴² A q. 77d, where the syntax is the same, has geminating feminine *a*, which provides a more natural statement.

81. Gen gob fear diongbhála dhamh. conmhaor go nagh im fharradh
 [Sgáthach:] 'Gion go b' fear diongbhála dhamh, conmhaor go n-ágh im fharradh
 [Sgáthach:] 'Though he is a man unequal to me, a fortunate dog-keeper in my company,

nocha mhiusa in *bhur* naghaidh. gonach am táir trom fháluidh
 nocha bhia-sa in *bhur* n-aghaidh, go nach am-táir trom-fhaluidh.'
 I shall not oppose you, lest grievous disgrace reach me.'

82. Coraighthear ar gualoinn finn. an *rioghan* luchair lainghrinn
 Córaigthear ar gualoinn Finn in *rioghan* luchair láin-ghrinn ;
 Beside Fionn is set the radiant Queen full fine ;

naisgthear an coibhche gan chair. ar mac qmhoill ahalmuin
 naisgthear in coibhche gan chair ar mac Cumhaill a h-Almuin.
 the flawless bride-price is pledged by Mac Cumhaill from Almhain.

(p. 392) 83. Tabhraidh uile dhamhsa dhe. chor anfhir ar achéile
 [Eaná:] 'Tabhraidh uile dhamh-sa dhe, chor in fhir ar a chéile ;
 [Eaná:] 'Give me all of it, the pledges of the man in respect of his partner ;

da ndeach libh minghean féin. bur mbeadh uile da hoighréir
 da ndeach libh m'inghean féin, bhur mbeadh uile dá h-oighréir.'
 If my own daughter went with you, all your goods would be at her disposal.'

84. Do rad ris gach aoinfhear dhíbh. grían escca muir is tír
 Do-radh ris gach aoin-fhear dhíobh : grían, éascca, muir, is tír.
 He pledged by every one of them : sun, moon, sea, and land.

is do radson dóibh *mur* soin. fa congnamh dhoibh accomhachduibh
 is do-rad-son dóibh mur soin : fa congnamh dhóibh a ccomhachduibh.
 and he pledged to them likewise : it was an aid to them for their powers.

85. On ló taoi id chliamhuin dúinn. ar enan diomad rúin
 'Ón ló taoi id chliamhuin dúinn,' ar Eaná d'iomad rúin ;
 'From the day thou art son-in-law to us,' quoth Eaná from a store of wile ;

aire tuccsam ard dile. dfhéachsoin ar mhinghine
 'aire tuccsam árd-dile'⁴³ d'fhéachsoin ar mhíngine
 'tis why we wished a deep desire [for] thy beholding our gentle offspring.

86. A sé mo mac an torc trom dimir oruibsi an fhorlann
 As é mo mac in torc trom d'imir oruibh-si 'n fhorlann ;
 My son is the massive boar who inflicted the force upon thee ;

mé féin in fomoir fuirmeach. do rinne *bhur* luathchuibhreach
 mé féin in fomoir fuirmeach do-rinne *bhur* luath-chuibhreach.
 I myself was the giant-in-likeness who made your immediate fettering.

87. O tharramair oruibh baoghal. gan neart sgéith gan crúas bhfaobhar
 Ó thárramair oruibh baoghal gan neart sgéith, gan crúas bhfaobhar,
 Since we gained an advantage over you without power of shields, without strength of arms,

racha éruic dhaoibh ann sin. dor daircciod is diolmháoinibh
 racha éruic dhaoibh ann sin d'ór d'aircciod is d'iol-mhaoibh.
a requittal should go to you then, of gold, of silver, of many riches.

⁴³ NíS read *aire tuccsamard dd i-le*, which appears ungrammatical.

88. An tochdar úd d'fhíannuibh fail.⁴⁴ raghaidh ina neanach dháibh
 In t-ochdar úd d'Fhíannuibh Fáil — raghaidh ina n-eineach dháibh
 That octet of the Fianna of Fál — there shall be, as their honour prices for them,

da chumhoil oir gach fir dhíbh is a ceathair da nairdrígh
 dá chumhoil óir gach fíor dhíbh is a ceathair dá n-áird-rígh.
 two ounces of gold to each man of them and four to their High King.

89. Beir mo shítheal mar shéad sluaigh. lat a mic qmhoill armruaidh
 Beir mo Shítheal mar shéad sluaigh lat, a mhic Cumhaill arm-ruaidh
 Bear my Dipper as a treasure of an host with thee, O Mac Cumhaill of bloody arms,

gloine is airccíod uile. dearccór ocus fionn bhruinne
 gloine is airccíod uile, dearcc-ór ocus fionn-dhruinne⁴⁵.
 all crystal and silver, red-gold and white bronze.

90. Mo shítheal is séad sluaigh. a mic cumhoill iolbhuadhaigh
 Mo Shítheal — is séad sluaigh — a mic Cumhaill iol-bhuadhaigh,
 My Dipper — it is a treasure for an host — O much-victorious Mac Cumhaill

go seachd bhfailcchibh dór gan achd. go madh feirrde a taodhuigheachd
 go seachd bhfailghibh d'ór gan achd, go madh feirrde a ttaodhuigheachd.
 and seven torques of gold without flaw, that its coming may be better.

91. Beirsi lat an bhfichil bhfinn. beir mo sgíán go nór⁴⁶ imghrinn
 Beir-si lat in bhfidhchill bhfinn ; beir mo sgíán go n-ór imghrinn ;
 Bear with thee the white chess-set ; bear my knife of noble gold ;

beir mfhainne dearccoir go mbloidh. fíu.c. cloch da chlochuibh
 beir m'fháinne dearcc-óir go mbloidh — fíu céad cloch dá chlochuibh.
 bear my honourable red-gold ring — worth a hundred [rings]⁴⁷ [is] a stone of its stones.

(p. 393) 92. Beir lat mochd nealta cloidhimh. do dhearccór ar na snoidhidh
 Beir lat m'ochd n-ealta cloidhimh⁴⁸ do dhearcc-ór ar na snoidhidh ;
 Take with thee my eight hilts of a sword with red-gold on their carving ;

iocfaihear ar ccoin cháomha. is *bhur* sleagha snasmhíne
 íocfaihear ar ccoin cháomha is *bhur* sleagha snas-mhíne.'
 restitution shall be made for noble hounds and your smooth-cut spears.'

⁴⁴ There is a large blot of ink between these two verses in P, but the scribe has written around it.

⁴⁵ LMRA. The P reading would mean 'white-edged'.

⁴⁶ *Nimrim* written in P after *nór* and underscored in the scribe's hand due to misreading the following word, which he then spells properly.

⁴⁷ NíS reads P as does the present author. Mac Neill translates the equivalent phrase in A with 'cattle?' in brackets. Prof. Gillies suggests an alternate expansion of *cach*, 'each one of its stones valuable': an elegant solution, but *cead* is written in full in A, which would necessarily place the origin of the abbreviation in Ω.

⁴⁸ Grammatically suspicious, as one would desire a gen. pl., (as it stands in A), though the rhyme forbids.

93. Antan tanoicc tra luighe. druididh cach dhíobh roile
 In tan tanoicc tráth⁴⁹ luighe druididh cach dhíobh re cheile ;
 Then when time of reclining came, each of them came together with a companion ;

do luigh gach aon ina iomdhaidh. níor bhordughadh eisionmhuin
 do luidh gach aon ina iomdhaidh ; níorbh ordughadh eis-ionmhuin.
 each one went into his bed ; it was not a disaffectionate arrangement.

94. Déargaithear an iomdaidh ann. taoscca fionn ina cómhhdhál
 Déargaighthea in iomdaidh⁵⁰ ann ; taoscca Fionn ina comhdhál.
 The bed is then dressed ; soonest [was] Fionn in approaching it.

díarr sgathoch suil do luigh. iasachd cruite in airfidigh
 Do iarr Sgáthach suil do luidh, iasachd cruite in airfidigh.
 Sgáthach asked before she went, a loan of the harp of the musician.

95. Cruit baoi istigh ar thríthead. dar liom fasulchair in séud
 Cruit baoi istigh⁵¹ ar thríthead — dar liom fá sulchair in séud :
 The harp of three strings inside — meseems agreeable their number :

téad diarann téud dumha án. an ccéadna darccod iomlán
 téad d'iarann téad d'umha án, an ccéadna d'aircciod iomlán.
 a string of iron, a string of pure copper, the same of perfect silver.

96. Anmonn na ttéud nar throm. suantoirghlés geantoirghleas oll
 Anmonn na ttéud nár throm : Súantoir-ghlés, Geantoir-ghlés oll ;
 The names the of strings which were not sad : Suantoir-ghlés, mighty Geantoir-ghlés ;

golltairghleas an téud oile. chuireas cách ar chámhoire
 Golltair-ghléas in téud oile chuireas cách ar chámhoire.
 Golltair-ghlés [is] the other string, which moves everyone into melancholy.

97. Da sinntear an goilltearghlés glan. do shluaighuibh troma an talmuin
 Dá seinntear in Goilltear-ghlés glan do shluaighuibh troma in talmuin,
 If bright Goilltear-ghlés is played to the mighty hosts of the earth,

sloigh an domhuin gan dolbha. do bheith uile acc bioth dhoghra
 slóigh in domhuin gan dolbha, do bheith uile acc bioth-dhoghra.
 host of the country without sorrow, all would be in lasting melancholy.

98. Da seinticche an geantoirghlés gádh. do shluagh an talmhain gan trom ár
 Dá seintighe in Geantoir-ghlés gádh do shlúagh in talmhain gan trom-ár,
 If Geantoir-ghlés were played to a host of the earth without heavy destruction,

do bheidís acc gáire dhe. ón trath rath mhor go roile
 do bheidís acc gáire dhe ón trath rathmhor go 'roile.
 they would be laughing from it from one auspicious hour to the next.

99. Da seinnticche an súantoirghles sáor. do shluaghuibh beatha na mbráon
 Dá seinntighe in Suantoir-ghlés sáor do shluaghuibh beatha na mbraon,
 If noble Suantoir-ghlés were played to hosts of the dewy world,

⁴⁹ Emendatio NiS.

⁵⁰ NiS reads *a n-iomdaidh*, but the scribe's consistent word division stands otherwise.

⁵¹ Likely corruption : A's reaing of *In cruít cháomh sin na ttri ttéad* is superior.

fir dhomhuin mór an modh. do beittís nasíor chodladh
 fir dhomhuin – mór in modh — do beittís 'na síor-chodladh.
 men of the world – great the marvel — they would be in long sleep.

(p. 394) 100. Seinnis an inghean fhathach. an suaintearghléas síor ghnathach
 Seinnis in inghean fháthach in Suaintoir-ghlés síor ghnathach,
 The skillful daughter played the Suaintoir-ghlés as usual,

no gur thuit athoirrchim súain. ar mac Muirne go mór bhúaidh
 no gur thuit a thoirrchim suain, ar mac Muirne go mór-bhuaidh.
 until he fell into his deep slumber, the son of Muirne of great power.^d

101. Cuiris na ccomhshúan *ttar* chách. bran is an tochdar ócclach
 Cuiris 'na ccomhshúan⁵² *ttar* chách Bran is in t-ochdar ócclaoch
 She put in deep sleep in addition to the rest Bran and the octet of warriors

go meadhon laoi mór an modh. ro bádar ina ccodladh⁵³
 go meadhon laoi – mór in modh — ro bádar ina ccodladh.
 to the middle of the day – great the marvel — they were asleep.

102. Anúair do éirigh grían os fíodh. dhóibhsíomh níor bhadhbhal an cion
 'N úair do éirigh grían ós fhíodh dhóibh-síomh níorbh adhbhal in cionn,
 When the sun rose over the woods for them the matter was not important,

ann ro bhádar imbéarnuiss. gér lugha leo a ttighearnus
 ann ro bhádar i mBearnuis gér lugha leo a ttighearnus.
 there they were in Bearnas, although they disliked their dominion.

103. A chú féin acc fear dhíobh. is a shleagh bhuidhe bhláithmhín
 A chú féin acc cach fear dhíobh is a shleagh bhuidhe bhláith-mhín,
 Each man of them had his own dog and his smooth-worn, yellow spear,

an tór is an tairccíod geal. na seóid 7 an tshitheal
 in t-ór is in t-airccíod geal na seóid is in t-Sítheal.
 the gold and the white silver, the jewels, and the Dipper.

104. Truagh nach éucc fuarois de. do raidh fionn flaith na féine
 'Truagh nach éucc fuaras de,' do-raidh Fionn flaith na féinne
 'Alas that I perished not thereof,' said Fionn the lord of the Fian

suil do bheith acc mnaoi mar sccéal. mo bheith adhchi anettréin
 'suil do bheith acc mnaoi mar sccéal mo bheith aidhchi i n-ettréin.'
 'before a woman might have it as a story, my being a night in powerlessness.'

105. Dona laithibh ro chreid fionn. an lásoin do rí na rionn
 Dona laithibh ro chreid Fionn in lá-soin do Rígh na rionn,
 Of the days Fionn believed, that day, in the King of the Stars,

sul do dheachaidh don bhíothbhán. rí na séad is na síothladh
 sul do dheachaidh don bhíothbhán, rí na séad is na Síothladh.
 before he went to the eternal place, the king of the treasures and of the Dipper.

⁵² R *tromshuan*. A agrees on the prefix : *tromcodladh*. The quatrain is lacking in M.

⁵³ Body text of P *do bheidís na síor chodladh*. This has been underlined and corrected in a vertically written marginal note. The scribe appears unusually careless in this section of the poem, with his orthography far less consistent than usual and a larger number of abbreviations, in addition to the error.

106. Annsoin tanceatar an fhían. idir andeas is aníar
Ann soin táncatar in fhían idir andeas is aníar,
Then the Fian came from the the South and the West,

gur innis fionn dóibh go tais. abeith adhchi na néccmais
gur innis fionn dóibh go tais a bheith aidhchi na n-éccmais.
until Fionn told them softly of his being the night away from them.

107. Na h-abuir bhreithir conghaoi. amhac Muirne is adhbhal gnaoi
[Féinnidhe:] 'Ná h-abuir bréithir co n-gaoi a mheic Mhuirne is adhbhal gnaoi,
[Men of the Fian:] 'Do not say a word with a barb, o son of Muirne, most great and courteous,

o mhadin dúinn ar an selcc. úaid a mic cumhoill airm deircc
ó mhadin dúinn ar in selcc úaid, a mic Cumhoill airm-deircc.'
from morning we were on the hunt away from thee, O son of Cumhall of the bloody arms.'

(p. 395) 108. Ro innis fionn dóibh sgeala. is gach abfhuaire do mhela
Ro innis Fionn dóibh sgéala, is gach a bhfuair do mhéla,
Fionn told the news to them, and all their getting disgraced,

stucc comhartha úaidh an fear. na seóid 7 an tshitheal
's tucc cómharta úaidh in fear : na seóid agus in t-Shitheal.
and the man gave from him the proof : the treasures and the Dipper.

109. Do bheir fionn na seachd bhfailge. do sheachd mnáibh na fionn aidhne
Do-bheir Fionn na seachd bhfailghe do sheachd mnáibh na fionn-aidhne⁵⁴ :
Fionn gave the seven jewels to the seven women of great age(?) :

edaoin, aobhdhonn, aoife, aobh, aillbhe ruithen 7 rocháomh
Éadaoin, Áobhdhonn, Aoife, Aobh, Aillbhe, Ruithean is Rocháomh
Éadaoin, Aobhdhonn, Aoife, Aobh, Aillbhe, Ruithen, and Rochaomh.

110. Tuccsan damhsa an fainne óir. fiú céad do gach crodh comhchóir
Tucc-san damh-sa in fáinne óir fiú céad do gach crodh comh-chóir,
He gave to me the golden ring worth an hundred of every well-proportioned stock,

an fithcheall dosccor na sleagh. 7 do chaoilte an tshitheal
in fhithcheall d'Oscor na sleagh, is do Chaoilte in t-shítheal
the chessboard to Osgar of the spears, and to Caoilte the dipper.

111. Seachd mbliadhna ag Chaoilte choir. don tshithil mhaisigh mhaothshróil
Seachd mbliadhna ag Caoilte chóir don t-Shíthil mhaisigh mhaoth-shróil,
Seven years at true Caoilte for the goodly, softly-bright dipper,

go ttáinig an fath da bhfuil. afacbhail os duibhcheachoir
go ttáinig in fáth dá bhfuil, a fácbháil ós Duibh-cheachoir
until the reason came for which is its finding over Duibh-cheachoir

112. Aón do ló ag duibhcheachoir. misi is fionn go niomad rúin
Aon do ló ag Duibh-cheachoir misi is Fionn go n-iomad rúin,
One day at Duibh-cheachoir [were] I and Fionn of abundant wile,

⁵⁴ Variant of OG *aidna(e)*, meaning obscure, though 'aged' is hypothesised. The word is thus in PLMR. A has rephrased : *do seacht mhnáibh ba lór aille*.

7 bhéos caoílte rom char. guaire giolla na síthal
 ocus bhéos Caoílte rom char, Gúaire giolla na sítheal.
 and moreover Caoilte who loved me, Guaire the lad of the dipper.

113. Iarras *caoílte* digh uisce. ar ghúaire fa glan tuisce
 Iarraís Caoílte digh uisce ar Ghúaire – fa glan t-uisce ;
 Caoilte asked a drink of water from Guaire – the water was clean ;

gabhus in sítheal na laimh. luidhis le diarraidh úarain
 gabhuis in sítheal 'na laimh ; luidhis lé d'iarraidh úarain.
 he took the dipper in his hand ; he went with it to seek a spring.

114. Fúair uairain ro *budh* maith námh. re taobh an chnuic rinn anár
 Fúair úaran ro budh maith námh re taobh in chnuic rinn anár ;
 He found a spring which was of goodly sparkle on the side of the hill to the West of us ;

ro thaitin ris féin mo núair. an *sruth* linidhe lán úar
 ro-thaitin ris féin, mo núar, in sruth línidhe lán-úar.
 it was pleasing to himself, alas, the straight streaming full spring.

115. Cuiris gúaire mac Neachtain. in sítheal fon sreibh sneacht ghloin
 Cuiris Gúaire mac Neachtain in sítheal fón sreibh sneacht-ghloin ;
 Guaire son of Neachtan put the Dipper down into the snowy-bright flow ;

ro thuit isin oiccen úaidh. in tshitheal dál gon diombúaidh
 ro-thuit isin oiccen úaidh in t-shítheal dál go ndiombúaidh.
 it fell from him into the abyss, the Dipper – an unfortunate happening.

(p. 396) 116. Naoi nonfaisigh ar dá chéad. ro bháoi da hiarraidh sní brécc
 Naoi n-onfaisigh ar dá chéad ro bhaoi dá h-iarraidh – 's ní brécc,
 Nine divers upon two hundred were seeking it – and it is no lie,

7 ní bhfuadar de. an lá soin sítheal chaoílte. Sítheal.
 ocus ní bhfuadar de in lá soin Sítheal Chaoílte. Sítheal.
 and they did not find it therefore that day, Caoilte's Dipper. Dipper.

117. Iar soin adubhairt fionn. ar an ttulaigh os ar ccionn
 Iar soin adubhairt Fionn, ar in ttulaigh ós ar ccionn,
 After that Fionn said, on the assembly-place above us,

nocha nfhuithear í dar leam. ón ló iniogh go ttí an tailgean
 'Nochan fhuithhear í dar leam ón ló iniogh go ttí in Tailgean
 'It shall not be found, meseems, from to-day until the Adze-head come.

118. Tiucfaidh an tailgeann tar muir. bidh sochar do ghaoídhealuibh
 Tiucfaidh in Tailgeann tar muir ; bidh sochar do Ghaoídhealuibh
 The Adze-head shall come across the sea ; he shall be a profit to the Gaedhil.

beinneochaidh éirinn abroid. is beannachaidh an ttiobruid
 beinneóchaidh Éirinn a broid, is beannachaidh in ttiobruid.
 he shall bless Erin from captivity, and he shall bless the fountain.

119. Mar bheinnéochus in sroibh slain. *Pátraic* mac Alpruinn iomláin
 Mar bheinnéochus in sroibh slain Pátraic mac Alpruinn iomláin,
 As he blesses the entire torrent, noble Patrick son of Calpurn,

tioccfaidh bradán sonna seal. thóicceabhas dó an tshitheal
 tioccfaidh bradán sonna seal, thóicceabhas dó in t-sitheal.
 a salmon shall come in time, which shall reveal to him the Dipper.

120. Níamhochthar bachla bána. cluicc cháomha is céolana
 Níamhóchar, bachlla bána, cluicc chaomha is ceolána,
 White crosiers, beautiful bells and handbells shall be adorned,

is soiscéala gan snímhce. dór is daircciod na sithile. Sitheal.
 is soiscéala gan snímhce d'ór is d'aircciod na Síthle.' Sítheal.
 and Gospel-books without dripping^d of the gold and of silver of the Dipper.' Dipper.

121. A síad sin ascéala dhuit. arí an phubuill aPhádrúic
 A síad sin a scéala dhuit, a rí in phubuill a Phádrúic ;
 Those things are its tale for thee, O king of the people, O Patrick ;

fann anochd atúsa dhe. ot chiúsa sitheal chaoílte. Sitheal.
 fann a-nochd a túsa dhe ot-chiú-sa Sítheal Chaoílte. Sítheal
 trivial to-night the origins of it ; I see the dipper of Caoilte. Dipper.

Notes

^a The P recension uses the form *Sítheal*, which, as noted in note *a* to the edition of the A recension, is condemned in *IGT*. The form is not used, save once, in A. It has not been corrected away here in normalisation. Vid. note *a* to SCA.

^b LMR collapse qq. 14 & 15 together by placing the first couplet of the former with the second of the latter. Archetype β must have had this simple copyist's error, which it bequeathed to the sub-recension. A has only one quatrain here in a similar fashion.

^c LMR this stanza is omitted. Cf. the similar list in A qq. 20-1, equivalent to qq. 16-7 here. The differences in names which are similar to words versus those which appear as asides suggest textual degeneration whereby epithets have become garbled into additional names. I have tentatively attempted to translate as much as possible as description, but cannot rule out the possibility that this is a list of names suggestive of words. NiS has given the last line as names.

^d Despite the unlikelihood of the reading, PLMR sic, but cf. A *sgríobhtha*, a *lectio faciliior*. The motif of the holy book that survives acts that would destroy it are common in many a culture and age, and it was certainly not unknown in the Gaelic world, cf. S. Rónán's Psalter in *Buile Suibhne*, ed. J.J. O'Keeffe, (London : ITS, 1913), pp. 4-9, neatly summarised in a quatrain of the poem that concludes the episode: 'Mo pshaltair doghabh 'na láimh/ dusfarlaic fon linn láin, do rad Críst chugum gan chair/ conar bhó misdi in pshaltair.' 'He seized my psalter in his hand, he cast it into the full lake, Christ brought it to me without a blemish, so that no worse was the psalter.' The reading of *snímce* (a MG result of the confusion of OG *snüid* with *snigid*) here is a surprising phrase, but certainly not impossible. (Another possibility is the loss of the mark of lenition from *snímche*, 'twisting,' potentially used in an extended sense to mean 'blemish'.)

Language

The following forms are worthy of note. Some comparisons to forms found in A are made as appropriate.

1a *ros fuair*, a good infixed pronoun with full meaning
 1d *charadraidh*, OG *caratrad*, an early word

- 2a,b *in síthil mbicc mbáin: láimh*, acc. fixed by rhyme
- 2b *do-rala it*, conservative deuterotonic verbal form, but followed by an independent pronoun as its subject in the MS, which should be removed. Cf. A q. 2b, *neoch do-radabhur...* where there is a modern verb in its place
- 2c *ga hiarraidh*, a modernism, not found in A
- 4c *nochar*, disyllabic negative
- 5c *no leathadh*, imperfect with older *no-*
- 6a *no bhiodh*, another good older imperfect
- 6c *ro leicceadh*, older preverbal form preserved
- 7b *bhFéin*, accusative fixed by rhyme to *réidh*
- 7c *nochar*, disyllabic negative
- 8b *no bhiathadh*, imperfect with *no-*
- 10a *teannfad-sa*, later future ending
- 10b *in sítheal n-aloinn n-ionnfhuair*, the slenderised acc. of the noun has been lost, but the nasalisation of the adjectives suggests that the accusative was there and that the modification is merely scribal.
- 10d *do-rala*, older deuterotonic form preserved
- 12c *ro innis*, older preverb, but this form of *ad-fét* is itself a modernism
- 15a *faoíis*, hiatus verbal form
- 19c,d *grian: d'óighriar*, although this quatrain is not in A, the couplet has a reflection in A q. 19c,d (which is q. 22 in P), where the rhyme is poor. Yet, one must note that P q. 19a,b self-rhymes, which suggests that both MSS may have modified the text of the section.
- 20d *amhuis*, nom. pl. used for *amhsa*, acc. pl., which is confirmed by rhyme with *lais*, IGT declension § 17 ; cf. the same in A, q. 18d
- 21b independent accusative pronoun
- 22a *ós tusa as fearr*, avoidance of the inflected copula, also done in A q. 19
- 23c *rod fia*, a MG construction, employing the infixed pronoun with full meaning
- 26b *léicceam*, older ending without fossilised *-d*.
- 27b *dá ttuccsam*, nondeponent preterite ending
- 28c *badhdhéin*, old reflexive
- 30c *ansa accam ar am tá*, the phrase is certainly archaic, but the line appears strained, hinting at pseudoarchaism. The reading in A is superior.
- 33a *gidh bha cú, níorsad cú*, the first part is an early phrasing, if read thus with the usual scribal contractions, although NiS expands with the later *géarbha*. The second is an inflected copula, but a plural in place of a singular, inferior to the reading of A, *nír bhó cú*.
- 34a *ní dheachaidh*, the MS reading could be potentially a perfective subjunctive used in the place of the corresponding indicative, but comparison to A makes far more likely that the perfect *deachaidh* is simply missing an intended final suspension stroke.
- 35d *n-úathmhair n-anaithnidh n-díthmhoir*, These adjectives, whilst well attested in *DIL* as OG and MG, are not found in the Classical language or in modern lexicons. *Anaidhnidh* is an improper spelling, but it appears that by MG the form *anaichnidh* was well attested in addition to the root spelling with *-th-*, shewing some variation in a lightly pronounced consonant.
- 37c *iompáis*, preterite from OG *so-áid, sóid*, which has prototonic stems in *-impó*. This verb did not survive into the Classical language.
- 37d independent accusative pronoun
- 38d *in torc n-áluinn n-alluidh*, nasalisation of the adjectives
- 39a *ro sginnsead*, older perfective with *ro-* using the non-deponent s-preterite
- 39c *iompáis*, vid. note 37c above
- 42a *nochar*, older disyllabic copula
- 42c *do-rochair*, old irregular perfect of *do-tuit*
- 43b *ro chuiris é*, perfect with *ro-*, but with an independent accusative pronoun

- 44a *torc... taoith dot ghuin*, a preterite of *do-tuit* formed from the future stem, a sign of the breakdown of the old verbal system in the later MG period, but the infixed pronoun, although with the later *do-*, has its full meaning.
- 45b *bhFéin*, acc. fixed by rhyme to *Néid*
- 47d *ionbhaidh-si*, nondeponent-derived ending in a 2d person singular verbal form, with *-dh* by analogy to the 3d person singular
- 48a *do éirigh*, preserved unelided preverb
- 48b *ó't-conairc*, from *ad-cí* is a good MG perfect
- 49b *sóidh*, if slenderised, as required by rhyme, it is a faulty attempt at an accusative. It must be noted that the form is not found in P, which is not legible, but reconstructed from the common reading of LMR.
- 49c *fhasttaigh*, from OG *ad-soí* with inorganic *f*.
- 50c *conmhaidh*, a MG preterite, recte *congmhaidh* from *con-gaib*
- 51b *ro chlosam*, non-deponent 1st person plural perfect
- 52c *beithi*, a good old future 2d person plural
- 53a,b,c,d *ro chuala*, all good perfects
- 54b *in aitheach n-áith n-iom-árd*, good nasalised accusative
- 54c independent accusative pronoun
- 56c *ro chuir*, perfect form, used to agree with *ros thócc*, both with aspectual reference to the preterite *ceanglais* in 56a
- 56d *ros thócc*, infixed pronoun has full meaning
- 57c *níor choimhgheadar*, monosyllabic later negative and deponent derived modern verbal ending
- 58c *ní raibh' acc Fionn*, modern form *raibh* in MS, but the following *acc* could permit the elision of the older disyllabic form.
- 59b *leana tú*, analytic subjunctive verb
- 60b *leana*, the same *a*-subjunctive used synthetically
- 60c *bíaidh*, early future
- 62c *rod fía*, an early phrasing using the infixed pronoun as a dative of advantage
- 63c *do chuadar-san*, later deponent derived ending
- 64a *ránccatar*, later deponent derived ending
- 65b *nochar*, disyllabic copula
- 66a *do chuadar*, later deponent ending
- 66b *fuadar*, later deponent ending.
- 66c *cuirther íad*, independent pronoun subject of the impersonal verb
- 67a *giolla n-ócc*, nasalisation of the adjective following the genitive plural
- 67c *do ríachd*, impersonal preterite of *ro-icc*, an old form
- 67c *línibh snas*, independent dative in an ossified phrase
- 69c *fris in rígh*, old preposition preserved
- 70a *ro h-asaoideadh*, passive with *ro-*
- 71b *tuccadh*, prototonic preterite impersonal from *do-bheir* ; the form is a modernism
- 71d *fuadar*, later deponent derived preterite ending
- 72a *ro ghabh*, perfect with *ro-*
- 72b *ad-bheart*, older *t*-preterite from *as-beir* containing a petrified infixed pronoun
- 74b *is mé*, uninflected copula
- 75a, *a seadh fil*, awkward phrasing suggestive of modernism
- 76a *ad-chíamaoid-ne*, modern ending with petrified suffix pronoun
- 76b *samholta*, older comparison
- 76c *in inghean n-áin*, nasalised accusative adjective
- 78c, 79a,c, *tar(r)ccaidh*, A equivalent *targaidh*, qq. 75c, 76a,c, glossed by Murphy as 'he offered', based on Bergin, 'Varia,' *Eriu* IX (1932), p. 139. It is taken as a preterite of *to-ro-ad-guid*. The simple verb *tairgim*, its direct descendent, exists in both Ir. & ScG., but it is possibly the modern verb in the narrative present, which is equally plausible. The spelling of the word in 78c and 79c P reflects contamination from *do-*

- áirci*, modern *tarrngim*, which, as Bergin notes on p. 140, is a modernism. That the middle use has the older spelling suggests that P was modernising his spelling here. Nevertheless, it does demonstrate that the scribe was reading it as present.
- 79d *orlasta*, evidently a scribal error for *orlaisce* as in SCA 76d. The corruption of the form here is likely due to scribal failure to recognise the word, for the modern *forloiscthe* has shifted its meaning, cf. note to SCA 76d
- 81c *nocha*, older disyllabic negative
- 85a *taoi id chliamhuin*, the later, developed *tá... ina* construction
- 85c *tucsam*, earlier non-deponent ending
- 86a,c analytic copulæ
- 86b *d'imir*, elided prevocal *do* is a strong modernism. It reads thus in LMR as well as P, placing it as far back as α. A has the line without either emphatic particle or article and *do* unelided.
- 87a *thárramair*, later deponent derived ending
- 87c *racha*, future of *téit* with early conjunct form used for the absolute or by giving the verb an a-subjunctive. The forms appear to be pseudoarchaisms, the parallel reading *rod fia* in A q. 82c appears older.
- 88c *gach fior*, independent dative indirect object
- 92c *ar coin cháomha*, nasalisation of the noun but lenition of its adjective
- 93c *do luidh*, suppletive preterite from *téit*.
- 94c *do iarr*, MS *d'iarr*, but the elision is not possible, as it leaves the line short. A *siris*, the *lectio difficilior*, suggests that the P recension has made a substitution carelessly.
- 94c *do luidh*, good older preterite from *téit*
- 95a *cruit*, vid. SCA note 91a.
- 96a *nár*, negative preterite relative copula
- 100c *thuit*, regularised later preterite of (*do*)-*tuit*.
- 101d *ro bádar*, good perfective with *ro*-
- 102c *ro bádar*, good perfective with *ro*-
- 104d *a(i)dhchi*, archaic spelling
- 105a *ro chreid*, perfective with *ro*-
- 105c *do dheachaidh*, doubled preverb (A *no go nd...*)
- 105d *Síothladh*, this gen., which is fixed by rhyme, although not used elsewhere in the lay, is permitted in IGT declension § 37.
- 106a *táncatar*, later deponent derived ending
- 108a *ro innis*, perfective with *ro*-
- 108b *gach a bhfuair*, a strained construction, suggesting a rewrite
- 112c *rom char*, infixed pronoun with full meaning
- 113d *luidhis*, a late form where the *t*-preterite forms of the preterite verb *luidh* are not recognised and given a redundant *s*-preterite ending
- 114c *ro-thaitin*, older perfect of *do-aitni*
- 114d *línidhe*, a rare word : vid. Murphy's glossary in *DF* III, p. 291.
- 115c *ro-thuit*, a late perfect from *do-thuit*, for earlier *do-rochar*
- 116b *ro bhaoi*, perfective with *ro*-
- 117c *nochan fhuighthea* *í*, disyllabic negative, but an independent pronoun is the subject of the impersonal verb, in acc. form according to Classical tendency.
- 119d *thóiccéabhas...* in *t-Sítheal*, The form is a transitional form of the future of *do-geib*, with a the substitution or addition of *do*-. The verb is not relative in A q. 115d but is of the same general form (*doigébhaidh*). The object in P is in the nom. and fixed by rhyme with *seal*, but it is to be noted that A has the acc. fixed by rhyme.
- 121a *a siad sin*, uninflected copula
- 121d *ot-chiú-sa*, older first person singular ending preserved in irregular verb

Equivalences of quatrains in the recensions

LMR are as P, except as stated, due to missing quatrains. There is no additional material in the minor MSS. L lacks P qq. 14c-15b and 17. M lacks P qq. 14c-15b, 17, 44, 99, 100, and has an inversion of the opening couplets of qq. 96 and 97 (i.e. 94 and 95 in M). R lacks P qq. 14c-15b and 17.

Between P and A there are 127 different quatrains. Although phrasing varies somewhat, the correspondences are with few exceptions functional equivalences line by line. It appears that A has the more logical ordering at all times, but the quatrains lacking in A fill real gaps in the narrative with language consistent with the rest of the lay. Hence the list is based on the progression of A with gaps the missing quatrains. The quatrains relate as follows, given in the form q. in A : q. in P

A	P
1a,b	1a,b
1c,d	2c,d
2a,b	2a,b
2c,d	1c,d
3	3
—	4
4	5
5	6
6	—
7	—
8-15	7-14
—	15
16	16
17	21
18	23
19	22
20	17
21	18
—	19
22	20
—	24
—	25
—	26
23-36	27-40
37	—
38-46	41-49
—	50
47	51
48	52
49	55
50a,b	54a,b
50c,d	—
51a,b	—
51c,d	54c,d
52	53
53	—
54-62	56-64
—	65
63-79	66-82
80	85
81	86
82	87
83	88

84	92
85	91
86	89
87	90
88	83
89	84
–	93
90-99	94-103
–	104
100	106
101	107
102	108
103	–
104	105
105-117	109-121

Evaluation

The modernisms of P not found in A are frequent, but give little insight into the poem ; there is no reason to dwell on them when a glance at the relevant quatrain in A shews an earlier form preserved. In many other places (e.g. the rhyme possibilities of A q. 104c,d and of P 105c,d) there are interesting alternatives of epithet, description, &c. These are more interesting from a literary perspective than a philological one. There are, however, a few good archaisms in P not found in A which assist in the evaluation of Ω . *Faoíis* in q. 15a is a good hiatus verb. Such forms did survive in the Classical period, but grew rarer. (Cf. Ó Cuív, 'Vowel Hiatus in Early Modern Irish', *Celtic Languages, Celtic Peoples...*, ed. A.T.E. Matonis, [Van Nuys, California : Ford & Bailie, 1990], p. 100 for such verbal forms, although he found no such preterites in the Bardic Tracts that he searched, suggesting that the form is preClassical.) A has not preserved the quatrain ; perhaps the scribe of A or one of his predecessors removed it as faulty. Likewise, q. 26, also lacking in A, preserves an older verbal ending (the verb *léicceam*) that is less well preserved in P than A overall. Q. 50 preserves an old verb *con(g)mhaidh* from *con-gaib*. Other passages, such as the *do-rala* in q. 2b, compared to *do-radabhur* in A provide glimpses of other possibilities, even if it be the case that both MSS have some amount of modification.

Although the lack of some of the older verbal forms of A or rhymes changed (e.g. q. 119d linguistic note) makes the lay as it appears in P, taken alone, appear potentially later than Murphy's date, P does little that complicates the linguistic picture of the lay overall. When the quatrains of P that are lacking in A are examined, they appear similar to the rest of the lay linguistically and improve the procession of the narrative ; they are clearly part of the original text of the lay. P, as noted above in a very few cases has preserved or suggested better readings. The close comparison of the text overall has little effect on such conclusions as can be drawn from the A recension alone, except to confirm that a few of the modernisms of A are not original to the text, as Murphy had intuited from the feel of the text seventy years ago.

A brief summary of the linguistic picture of the lay as taken from both texts' evidence and with consideration of Murphy's evaluation (*DF* III, pp. 36-7) is as follows. The copula presents a mixed picture. The MG forms in SCA 29a are most notable ; the first is confirmed in P 33a, but the second is clearly corrupt there. The uninflected plural copula of A 117a is confirmed in P 121a. There is little to say about the infixed pronouns that Murphy did not cover, except to note that the cases which he considered truly meaningless, qq. 69a and 74a, are absent in P. In the former case, P has a less strained syntax. In the latter, P has the prototonic form where A preserves the deuterotonic, and one would expect that A is superior. In this case, the pronoun is not fully meaningless, as it can be read proleptically as an appositive to *Sgáthach* in the next line. The infixed pronoun as a whole is used frequently and naturally in all persons ; in contrast there are only three independent accusative pronouns in A, (not counting subjects of the impersonal where the acc. form is used, as listed fully by Murphy). Of these, only the one at 33d is paralleled in P. The other two (at qq. 56a and 80c)

are not in P, which preserves phrases that appear older. The analytic verb *do-gní tú* (A q. 36b) is not found in P (q. 40b), which has a superior line also avoiding the awkward use of the gerund that follows in the prepositional phrase in A. The second example Murphy cited at A q. 51c is due to a misreading, vid. the note to the line in the edition above. The analytic subjunctive of A q. 57b is confirmed in P q. 59c, but in the following quatrain, P has 'béid fo geasaibh cuid dot Féin' in reference to the octet the churl has conquered where A has the inferior line 'bíadh tú fo geassaibh sa fFéin,' which repeats the sense of 57a. Thus, of the exempla of analytic verbs in A, two of the four are almost certainly later modifications. The nom. in place of the acc. in A q. 102d is confirmed by a different rhyme in P q. 108d. The nom. pl. for acc. pl. in A q. 18d is confirmed also in P q. 23d. On the other hand, SCP q. 10a,b has the acc. adjectives confirmed in rhyme that are confirmed as nom. in A q. 11; the reading of P for line a of the quatrain is better than the odd use of *le* in A. Thus the number of incorrect accusatives backed by rhyme is reduced by one. The only use of *tá... ina* which is of the fully evolved use, in A q. 80a is confirmed exactly in P q. 85a. The other striking modernism of *iná é* of A q. 32c is confirmed by P q. 40c. The significant items of vocabulary of P are generally identical to those in A, which Murphy has listed well enough. To them, P adds the old verbal form *do-rochar* (q. 42c) which has been rephrased in A, the preservation of the first person singular termination of *-ú* in the final quatrain, the hiätus verb *faoîis* in q. 15a, and *con(g)mhaidh* in q. 50c, a quatrain missing from A.

The result of the comparison confirms Murphy's general date. Some of the minor points, such as independent pronouns and analytic verbs from A, can be shewn to be later changes to the text from good readings in P. But both of the important syntactical modernisms that pushed for a later date are confirmed. As noted in Part I above, Murphy had a tendency to be overly cautious regarding the *tá... ina* construction due to his rejection of Ó Maille's analysis of the phenomenon. This is the primary factor that pushed Murphy's date to 1200. That date remains reasonable, as he did recognise that some of the minor modernisms were likely due to the transmission process. As often, one may edge such a date backwards by a quarter century of the scale of theoretical dates in recognition of Murphy's strong tendency to err on the side of lateness and not to the centre-point of the possible range.

VI : The Prose 'Sít heal Chaoilte'

The text here is a translation of the diplomatic edition of the *Agallamh* by Nessa Ní Sheaghda, vol. III, pp. 14-21, with full collation with the MS. Unlike the lays, which needed greater scrutiny, the prose tale is here translated for purposes of comparison. Ní Sheaghda's text is highly accurate, although she regroups word divisions freely, especially in the numerous compounds. She misses a few faint length marks, which she then supplies with a macron. Such points do not affect the meaning of the text. There is only one substantive correction to be made, p. 15, line 5, read *hóicche-thiobrad go hurárd, 7 as amhlaidh...*

The translation here is very literal, so as to preserve the baroque intensity of the compound adjectives and overbearingly flowery prose style.

The Prose Tale from *Agallamh na Seanórach* in 24 P 5

(AS, vol. III, p. 14 = MS p. 376)

The holy clerk proceeded forth then, until he came to the dark pools of blue colour, froth-foaming, of Duibh-cheachair, and thereupon he and Oisín mac Fionn sat down. The Apostle enquired then of Oisín, what was the name of the place in which they were.

'The Black Quagmire of the Ridge of the Two Fawns' (i.e. *Duibh-cheachair Droma Dá Oss*) is the true name from lore (i.e. *dinnshenchas*) of this ridge that our people had, truly indeed, good Apostle,' quoth Oisín, 'and often I saw Fionn and the Fiana of Erin most auspiciously upon that royal hillock there' quoth he, 'and, moreover, Fionn truly prophesied thy coming, O Adzehead, to this hill, that thou mightest expel dæmons from their sorceries and mightest bless this hill without danger for that reason, and it is very rare that his lasting prophecy has been in the lie heretofore.'

'The prophecy of the Fenian lord shall not lie by the goodwill of the great Trinity, because forevermore this hill shall be blessed, without danger.'

Then he arose, and circled the mountain like a runner, and blest the mound most gladly. Thereafter, they returned to the white-striped, bright-frothing, snowy-streaming pools of the bright fountain that was in Duibh-cheachair, and he gave the sign of the Cross discreetly over its foamy outpourings and over its seemly waters, and he blest it without deficiency afterwards.

¹ In the lay itself, it is *Dubh-eochair*, the 'black verge' or 'border'.

Thereby, they roused the purple-spotted, yellow-striped salmon from its midst and from ocean torrents of the full-font, and from the same, the manifoldly-precious salmon came richly in a continuous-linear thrust of lifting to the intensely-bright surface of the font even the bright, precious dipper, very high on the lip and onto the surface, so that it placed it in front of Patrick suddenly, elegantly. Patrick takes into his hands full-promptly that elegant, nobly-ornamented dipper. Then Oisín, after beholding it, recognised the dipper ; and then he said :

'This is the dipper of Caoilte from Collamhuir then, O holy clerk,' quoth he.

'How did it get into that fount ?' quoth Patrick.

'I shall tell thee,' quoth Oisín, '[that] and also how it was found first of all, that is, one day when we were in our Fiana,' quoth he, 'along with Fionn Mac Cumhaill, above the very-prosperous Eas Ruaidh.² Be that as it may, Fionn enumerated woods, forests, and the wildernesses of Laighean and Leth Conn for us then. Fionnchadh, Conn Cos-Luath, Faolchú, Seanach son of Fear Crum, noble Cairbre, Lughaidh of Liathdruim ; and three kings of the *fiana* of the men of Britain ; that is, Forann, Anluan, and Fearadhach; that is. the three sons of Iobhair of doughty deeds ; got the province of Connacht. And good was the lad that came then,' quoth Oisín, 'that is, Forann, son of Iobhair ; and foreign lads never came into the Fian of Heroes that were better than he. And they made the third division of the mercenaries and of the emissaries of the Fiana of Erin along with our servants, and they led away no less than poets, philosophers, musicians, *ollaimh* ; that is, Suanach, Seanach, Breasal the garrulous, handsome Aoifear, Ailgeannan, Ciothruaidh, Cobhthach, Cais, Maine, Éanna, Cronan, Ciona, Ceolach, Faoi, and Fosgadh. Those were the foreign fellows of Forann, and he preferred musicians, foreigners, and servants to serve him every good that he himself had.

'Then the Fian gave a heavily-envious murmur concerning Forann, because their jealousy was great, concerning all of the foreigners and servants that he carried away from him. The hunt of Laighean to the Laochradh and Osraighe to the coast was taken by me,' quoth Oisín, 'and Fionn gave me all the gifts that day, that is, Cnú Dheireoil the great musician and Blathmaid his wife, and Daighre mac Morna the soldier and chief-*ollamh*.

'Good were the spirits of the son of the King of Britain and my own spirits that day, and we gave each other three kisses before parting.

'The hunt of Midhe, nobly abounding in deer, and great Uladh, were taken for the usual Fian. Fionn sat in Bearnas then, and eight of the officers of the valourous Fian in his company : little Aodh, son of Fionn, Riondolbh, Fál Feadha Mor of Eamhnainn, Cuan

² *ós úir Easa ro-thurchorthaigh Rúaidh*, Assaroe, the place name is split by an epithet.

Cruimghlinne, Glas son of Gaidheal Garbhleith, Caoince the ruddy-purple, Dáire green-teeth the noble prince in Glaisi Bulcca, and Donnghus. The animals that were their dogs then : Bran was ahead of Fionn ; little Aodh had Fuilteach ; Riondolbh had Eachtach ; Fál Feadha Mór had Fear Glinne ; Cuan had Gaoth ; Glas had Aithim ; Caoince had Fiamhach ; Dáire had Fearg Lonn ; Donnghus had Fear Baoth.

'And at the time then, they saw the beast of an immensely-vast pig of the dark-wilderness to attack most fervently. They released their pack all together against their equal opponent, and it slew them all at once. Then Fionn incited Bran against it. The boar fled beyond the eastern glen, so that the glen of our adventure is still called Glen of Flight (i.e. *Gleann Teichidh*). Bran engaged the boar then, and she took one of its ears in her broad mouth, and Fionn took the other ear. The octet cast their most fierce aggressor – their eight smoothly-cut, long-pointed spears at once at it – and they glanced off it as though it were a stone of a horn which they were striking, without wounding, without bloodying him. Then he turned to them [the octet] and broke them [the spears] fiercely-mightily, and gave a horrible, enormous, awful shriek out of him after breaking the spears, so that a hideous slate-pale churl answered from the hill nearby, and he said to them :

"Leave me the pig, lads," quoth he, "or ye all shall perish by my hand."

'The Fenians were not permitted that opportunity by him for listening,' quoth Oisín, 'without starting at him at once. The churl turned towards them, and he tied up those two quartets violently, without assistance. Fionn and Bran were engaging the boar at that time, and they could do naught to it. The churl threw the boar onto his back and took it away from them in spite of them, and they were not able in their condition to do aught except to watch him overpowering them [the octet of Fenians] ; and he [the churl] would put them [Fionn and Bran] under spells, unless he [Fionn] followed him [the churl] and the boar to that mound. Fionn said that unless he should see his people unviolated, he would not be disposed to follow him [the churl].

"There will be," quoth the churl, "many other reparations for that."

'He loosed his fettering from every one of the octet of warriors whom he had bound then. Then they went one way and another to the *sídh* over Gleann Deirg-dheis. After their arrival at the door of the *sídh*, the churl gave a touch of the druidic wand that was in his hand to the boar, so that he made a gracious youth – easily restored – from it.

'He gave himself the same, so that he became a resplendent sun above the good men of the earth in figure and in form. Then they went into the *sídh*, and fifty young lads of youthful

form, well-dressed, well-formed, arose, and fifty scholars adorned with trailing cassocks and purple shields" poured a welcome for the Fenians in truly friendly manner, and three fifties of green-robed women came inside after them, and each one of them along with her escort came into the banquet-hall right cheerfully. Their serving was flawless in nimbleness, and concerning the pouring, it was doubled-up for the goodmen. Fionn spoke afterwards,' quoth Oisín, 'and this is what he said :

"Who are ye, O spirited, greatly hearty folk who would be good to us without being like us who are not immortal ?"

"Have not ignorance of us for long, O Overlord," quoth the young warrior. "Eanáin son of Leabhar Tuinne is my name," quoth he, "and Croithfhionn is the beautiful figure, the daughter of Manannán, the good Queen accompanying me ; and we do not have children, save a pair, that is, a son and a daughter ; Uathach is the son, and Sgáthach is the daughter, and the one over opposite us, O Overlord, is the only son that we have."

"He is indeed handsome," quoth Fionn, "for royal were his appearance and deed, and if we saw the daughter," quoth he, "we would give her description in full."

'The young daughter was brought in then, and when Fionn saw her, it caused a flood of heavy passion for her, and he at once requested her from her father.

"What is to be done in return for that, O daughter ?" quoth Eanáin.

"Even though an evenly matched husband for me would not be a dog-keeper," quoth the daughter, "whatsoever thou commandest me to do, I shall do it it without doubt," quoth the daughter.

'Then the daughter was betrothed to Fionn,' quoth Oisín. 'Eanáin brought Fionn noble treasures thereafter ; that is, a chess-set, ring, knife, eight sword hilts, and a treasure that was better than every treasure : that is, the dipper which is in thy hand, O holy cleric, O Patrick,' quoth Oisín. 'Fionn gave it to Caoilte afterwards.

'Then one day we were in the company of Fionn,' quoth Oisín, 'and he got a tremendous thirst then, and he asked Guaire son of Neachtan to go to find drink for him.^b Guaire goes quickly for that purpose and bore the dipper with him, and he came to this fountain where we are. He put the dipper most quickly under the delightfully-bright stream. What was it that then happened,' quoth Oisín, but that the ever-strong torrent swept away the dipper from him, in a way that he could not get it. The Fian came then to his summons, and a hundred and nine divers from us went beneath the torrent, and it was in vain for them, and they did not get the dipper ; and Fionn prophesied thy coming, O Adze-head, to these waters, and that thou

wouldst bless it, and that it would be thou that mightest get that dipper here, and that thou mightest have it for crosiers and melodious bells after finding it. And broken is my heart by seeing it,' quoth he.

And he recited the quatrains :

Síothal Chaoilte cia ros fuair...

Notes

^aCassocks are not in the poem — the prose author has made an error in reading the poem, reading *linibh láin* 'in their full number', as 'in long surplices' by confusion with *léinibh* from *léine*, and then modernising the independent dative by other words as *sgúirdleabhor*. The texts of the lay agree unanimously that *linibh* is intended. Purple shields are an addition with no basis in the text of the lay. The dependence of prose upon verse in this case is thus proven.

^bIt is not Fionn who thirsts in either version of the poem. In P, Caoilte asks a drink, and Guaire fetches it (SCP q. 113a). In A, it is Guaire himself who has the thirst (SCA q. 109a). In all three cases, the point in common is that it is the duty of Guaire to be water-boy. The metre in both recensions of the poem requires a disyllabic name ; Fionn is not a possibility for a substitution.

VII : *Laoidh Cloidhimh Oscair*

Incipit 'A chloidhimh chlérchín in chluig'

This is an edition based on the sole MS, A. Its principles and presentation are as given in the General Introduction. There has been considerably more normalisation, as the text of the MS appears more carelessly written than many of the previous lays. As many of the names in this lay are Classical, those of them which can be identified with certainty have been given in their usual English forms in translation ; they can be compared with the normalised Gaelic line.

(23 v.) 1. A chloidhimh chlérchín in chluig. sochaidhe ba námha duit
[Oisín:] A chloidhimh chlérchín in chluig, sochaidhe ba námha duit,
[Oisín:] O Sword of the clericlet of the bell, many were the foes thou hadst,

& díar bheanuis accinn. is do sgarais ré a ccoluinn
ocus díar bheanuis a ccinn is do sgarais ré a ccoluinn.
and whose heads thou severedest and clove from their bodies.

2. Céid fhear dar bheanuis aceann. crithir daingean mac duibhgreann
Céid-fhear dar bheanuis a cheann Crithir daingean mac Duibhgreann,
The first man whose head thou severedest [was] strong Crithir son of Duibhgre,

minéalus do chaídh do choir. do laim sádoirn mheic pallóir
Minéalus do chaídh do chóir, do láimh Sádoirn mheic Pallóir.
whom Menelæus lamented fittingly, by the hand of Saturn son of Pallor.

3. Tiobha do róine in cloidhimh. sochaidhe dia attug oighidh
Tiobha^a do-róine in cloidheamh ; sochaidhe dia ttug oigheadh ;¹
Tiobha wrought the sword ; to many has it brought death ;

ní raibhe ag duine lann cruaidh. is mó do dhithigh deaghslúaigh
ní raibhe ag duine lann cruaidh is mó do dhíthigh deagh-shlúaigh.
man has had no tough blade that destroyed more good people.

4. Do cheadainm in crom catha. alaim sáduirn na flatha
Do chéad-ainm in Crom Catha, a láimh Sáduirn na flatha
Thy first name was the Curved-Battler, in the hand of Saturn of the lordship

mór ccath tugadh le tfháobhraibh. a chloidhim ghuirm ghlan fháobhraigh
mór ccath tugadh le t'fháobhraibh a chloidhimh ghuirm ghlan-fháobhraigh.
a multitude of battles were given with thy edges, O blue shiny-edged Sword.

5. Do marbhus sádorn² mhac lúain. do laim sádoirn moir go mbúaidh
Do mharbhais Sádorn mhac Lúain do láimh Sádoirn moir go mbúaidh –
Thou slew Saturn son of Luan by the hand of victorious great Saturn –

sa chóig meic brosgar go mblaidh. mór in cosgar achloidhimh
's a chóig meic – brosgur go mblaidh — mór in cosgar, a chloidhimh.
and his five sons – famous the destruction — great was the victory, O Sword .

6. Ró mharbhuis achrúim catha. do láimh sadoirn na flatha
Ro mharbhuis, a Chruim Chatha, do láimh Sádoirn na flatha
Thou slew, O Curved-Battler, by the hand of Saturn of the lordship,

¹ emendatio Murphy, *DF* III, p. 45, n. 3a,b.

² MacNeill read *Sadhorn* ; what he read as the mark of aspiration seems rather a mark of length to this author, leaving the name as another *Sádorn*, it is most likely a scribal error which has displaced another name.

accath mhoighe glinne grinn. grinne 7 dearg is deigrinn
 i ccath Mhoighe Glinne grinn Grinne, is Dearg, is Deighrinn
 in the battle of excellent Magh Glinne Grinne, and Dearg, and Deighrinn.

7. Ró mharbhuis días ard oile. ga chineadh ris nár sceile
 Ro mharbhuis días árd oile — gá cineadh ris nár sceile?
 Thou slew another noble pair — what race for which it was not a tragedy?

ar slíabh tiris nocha gó. ílis agus iacóbó
 ar Sliabh Tiris — nocha gó — Ílis agus Iacóbó.
 on Sliabh Tiris — it is no lie — Ilis and Iacobo.

8. Ro ghoid íob ó a athair. thú acloidhimh fa trean tachair
 Ro ghoid íob³ óna athair, thú a chloidhimh fá tréan tachair,
 Jove stole thee from his father, O Sword that was strong of conflict,

(24 r.) nó gur chossain tu go crúaidh. ar slíabh dhassaigh drogheanrúaidh
 nó gur chossain tú go crúaidh ar Sliabh Dhasaigh droighean rúaidh.
 when he toughly won thee on Sliabh Dhasaigh of the bloody thorns.^b

9. O tarraigh in crom catha. íoib mac inardfhlatha
 Ó tharraidh in Crom Catha Íoib mac in árd-fhlatha
 When the Jove son of the Overlord obtained the Curved-Battler,

níor fuilngead díóibh íear soin. go ttug cath is a athair
 níor fuilngeadh d'Ióibh íar soin go ttug cath is a athair.
 it was impious of Jove thereafter that he gave battle even to his father.

10. Dardán mac íoib fa borb. issé do rad tar mur incolcc
 Dardán mac íoib, fá borb ; is sé do-rad tar múr in colcc
 Dardanus son of Jove, who was rough ; it is he who took the weapon over the rampart

isa amathair eil eachtra. ba hoirrdhearc inimtheachta
 is a mhathair Eileachtra ; ba hoirdhearc a n-imtheachta.
 and his mother Electra ; their adventure was glorious.

11. O tarraidh in crom catha. dardán mac anardflatha
 Ó tarraidh in Crom Catha, Dardán mac in árd-flatha
 When Dardanus son of the overlord obtained the Curved-Battler,

ro marbh dardán ar in muigh. sadán donn díth achloidhimh
 ro mharbh Dardán ar in muigh Sadán donn díot,⁴ a chloidhimh.
 Dardanus slew upon the plain Sadán the noble with thee, O sword.

12. Áon mhac ag sadán do chloinn. ba húasal é ba háluinn
 Áon mhac ag Sadán do chloinn — ba húasal é, ba háluinn ;
 Of children, Sadán had one son — he was noble, he was handsome ;

mór athairm ós na treabhaibh. dar bhainm gola gallamhoil
 mór a thairm ós na treabhaibh — dar bh'ainm Gola Gallamhoil.
 great his renown over the tribes — whose name was Gola Gallamhoil.

³ The spelling of many of the names reflects earlier orthography ; the form *lób* should have a lenited *b* by this point (cf. *Imtheachta Aeniasa, Stair Ercuil*, &c., passim). Names however, have not been modernised.

⁴ Emendatio Murphy, *DF* III, p. 45, n. 11d.

13. Ro luidh gola for a bhreith. go dardan is é for creich
 Ro luidh Gola for a bhreith go Dardán is é for creich,
 Gola went for his due to Dardanus, who was on a raid,

go ro thaobh ris ger ffeidm gus. go ndearnatar cleamhnus
 go ro thaobh ris ger ffeidhm gus go ndearnatar cleamhnus.
 and he sided with him, though a hard effort, so that they made a marriage-alliance.

14. Tuc gola ainghean mor mhnáoi. do dhardán ba gile gnáoi
 Tuc Gola a hinghean mar mhnáoi do Dhardán – ba gile gnáoi ;
 Gola gave his daughter as a wife, to Dardanus – most shining was [his] repute ;

maith acruth sa ciall thrá. bé chrotha ingean golá
 maith a cruth 's a ciall thrá, Bé Chrotha inghean Golá.
 good were her form and her wits indeed, Bé Chrotha, daughter of Gola.

15. Beiris ingean gola mac. do dardán go ngile nglac
 Beiris inghean Gola mac do Dhardán go ngile nglac :
 Gola's daughter bore a son to Dardanus with white hands :

dath na fola for aghnúis. ba hé ainm manafalúis
 dath na fola for a ghnúis ; ba hé a ainm Mana Falúis.
 the colour of blood was upon his face ; his name was Mana Falúis.

16. Tuc mana in cloidheamh go ttróst. nochar mhana bheith a ttost
 Tuc Mana in cloidheamh go Trost, nochar mhana bheith a ttost :
 Mana sent the sword to Trost, it was not a portent for its silence :^c

ro marbh trost naoí míle dhe. sdo gabh ríge na troie
 ro mharbh Trost naoí míle dhe 's do gabh ríge na Tróie.
 Trost slew nine thousand then, and he took the kingdom of Troy.

17. Tuc trost dilís co mbúaidh. in cloidheamh díá sloighte slúaigh
 Tuc Trost d'Ilís co mbúaidh in cloidheamh díá slóidhte slúaigh
 Trost gave victorious Ilus the sword whereby hosts were smitten,

is mór ccath ro sloigheadh shoir. do laimh ilís achloidimh
 is mór ccath ro slóigheadh shoir do láimh Ilís, a chloidimh.
 and great the battalions mustered in the East by the hand of Ilus, O Sword.

18. Tuc ilis in colg ágha. da mhac diolus dingmhála
 Tuc Ilís in colg ágha dá mhac Díolus dingbhála ;
 Ilus gave the blade of battle to his worthy son Diolus ;

ro dícheandadh leis na slóigh. don milidh do laimheadhóin
 ro dícheandadh leis na slóigh don mhilidh, do Láimheadhóin.
 the hosts were beheaded with it by the soldier, by Laomedon.

19. Laimheadhón ba maith lámhach. ro bo mílidh mórdhálach
 Láimheadhón ba maith lámhach ; ro bo mílidh mórdhálach ;
 Laomedon whose dexterity was good ; he was an haughty soldier ;

in fearsoin mar treathan tonn. do marbh ercail é daondhorn
 in fear soin mar treathan tonn do mharbh Earcuil é d'aon-dorn.
 that man, like the billow of the waves, Hercules slew him with one hand.

20. Rug ercoil leis accuibhreach. bean láimheadhóin ger mhuirneach
 Rug Earcuil leis a ccuibhreach bean Láimheadhóin, ger mhuirneach,
 Hercules took with him in chains Laomedon's wife, though she was dear

san gréig in mílid míadhach. bá hé rí na ttroighíanach
 san Gréig : in mílid míadhach bá hé rí na tTroighíanach.
 into Greece : the distinguished soldier was King of the Trojans.

21. Tugsat greagaigh leó tar muir. ceann laimheadhóin lán dafhuil
 Tugsat Gréagaigh leó tar muir ceann Láimheadhóin lán dá fhuil,
 The Greeks took with them across the sea the head of Laomedon full of his blood,

faidhbh is arm is earradh. in fir mhairbh go haoínionadh
 faidhbh is arm is earradh in fhir mhairbh go haoín-ionadh.
 spolia, and arms, and armour of the dead man to one place.

22. Tuc earcail do mhac rí grég. cloidheam laimeadóin ní bréag
 Tuc Earcuil do mhac rígh Grég cloidheamh Láimheadhóin – ní bréag ;
 Hercules gave to the son of the King of Greece Laomedon's sword – 'tis no lie ;

(24 v.) rus tiodhlaic don triath sochrach. díar bainm iáson ilcrotach
 ros tiodhlaic don triath sochrach dár b'ainm Iásón il-crothach.
 he presented it to the prosperous prince, whose name was Jason of much handsomeness.

23. Fiche bliadhain is da mí. don loinn ag iasóin go lí
 Fiche bliadhain is dá mí don loinn ag Iásóin go lí ;
 A score of years and two months beautiful Jason had the blade ;

ro budh scél ádhbhal ger bhail. a mharbhadh don da nathair
 ro budh scél adhbhal – géir bhail — a mharbhadh don dá nathair.
 it was a tragic story – sharp the fate — his slaying by the two serpents.

24. O do rochair nír gníomh taiss. iasón mac essóin ámhnaiss
 Ó do-rochair – níor ghníomh tais — Iásón mac Easóin amhnais,
 When fell – it was not a soft event — Jason son of fierce Easón,

tuc ercuil chuige ar aghrádh. arís cloidheamh laimheadháin
 tuc Earcuil chuige ar a ghrádh arís cloidheamh Láimheadhóin
 Hercules took for himself for love of it the sword of Laomedon again.

25. Trúagh le hercail prímh fabhrón. in diáighiathair laimeadhón
 Truagh le hEarcuil Prímh fá bhrón i ndiaigh athar Láimheadhón
 Hercules had sorrow for Priam who was mourning after his father Laomedon

do fhosglaic glais angeimhil. do leig as go lán deimhin
 do fhosglaic glais a ngeimhil ; do léig as go lán deimhin.
 he loosed the locks of their chain ; he loosed[it] from him truly indeed.

26. Adubairt ercail go gnáoi. na bísi a phrimh mur atáoi
 Adubairt Earcuil go ngnáoi, 'na bí-si, a Phrímh, mur atáoi
 Hercules respectfully said, 'be thou not, O Priam, as thou art,

na déana dobbrón dot sód. toigebtar traói laimeadhón
 na déana dobrón dot shód ; tóigébthar Traói Láimeadhón.'
 make thou no lamentation for thy state ; Laomedon's Troy shall be built.'

27. Ro tagaibh earcail in traói. & do rat do prímh mnaoí
 Ro thógaibh Earcuil in Traói agus do-rat do Phrímh mnaoí
 Hercules built Troy and gave Priam a wife

do leasughadh amhoide. ingean rígh na mórtreóide
 do leasughadh a mhóide ingean rígh na mór-Threóide.
 for fulfillment of his vow, the daughter of the king of great Troad.

28. Día maireadh mathairsi beó. is rí na gréigi gan gó
 'Día maireadh m'athair-sí beó is rí na Gréigi gan gó,
 'Were my father to endure in life and the king of Greece without falsehood,

is fearr liom fós nó a ffaca. agam do mnaoí achapa
 is fearr liom fós nó a ffaca agam do mnaoí Achaba.'
 I would prefer yet to all I have seen that I have Hecuba for a wife.'

29. Do rónsat smúaineadh oile. ríogha in talman toghaidhe
 Do-rónsat smúaineadh oile ríogha in talmhan toghaidhe :
 They made another decision, kings of the elect land :

faidbh aathar do prímh na ttreabh. mar áon rissín deagcloidheamh
 faidbh a athar do Phrímh na ttreabh mar áon rissín deagh-chloidheamh.
 the spolia of his father to Priam of the tribes along with the good sword.

30. Rug earcail leis prímh gan brón. rus togaibh traói laimeadhón
 Rug Earcuil leis Prímh gan brón ; ros tógaibh Traói Láimeadhón ;
 Hercules bore with him Priam without grief ; he built Laomedon's Troy ;

ba lughaide abháoghal gan bhéad. earcoil bliadhain día coiméad
 lughaide a bháoghal gan bhéad⁵ : Earcuil bliadhain día coimhéad.
 the less was its danger without mischief : Hercules was a year in its protection.

31. Do togaibh earcoil in traói. ní raibe cathair mar hí
 Do thógaibh Earcuil in Traói ; ní raibhe cathair mar hí ;
 Hercules built Troy ; there was no city like it ;

fágbhaidh an traói lán do slóg. ag prímh ag mac láimheadhón
 fágbhaidh in Traói lán do slóg ag Prímh ag mac Láimheadhón.
 he leaves Troy full of a garrison in the hands of Priam, the son of Laomedon.

32. Ro marbhadh earcail an áig. le prímh re mac láimheadháin
 Ro marbhadh Earcuil in áig re Prímh re mac Láimheadháin ;
 Hercules the triumphant was slain by Priam, by the son of Laomedon ;

ní anaiscíd do marbhadh. ceann gaisgidh na tromthalmhan
 ní an-aiscíd do marbhadh ceann gaisgidh na trom-thalmhan.
 not unavenged was slain the chief of arms of the weary world.

33. Alaxandair do mhill Traói. mac do prímh sin ré na mnaoí
 Alaxandair do mhill Traói mac don Prímh sin ré n-a mhnaoí ;
 Alexander who destroyed Troy [was] a son of that Priam by his wife ;

⁵ The line is faulty by Classical standards. Unless one admits the late form *lugha*, which is unClassical and progressive usage, he must omit *ba* with Murphy.

ba damhna guil is gala. da ttuc tar muir eléna
 ba damhna guil is gala dá ttuc tar muir Ealéana.
 it was a cause of lamentation and battle when he bore Helen over the sea.

34. Alaxandair tuc anoir. bean minélus na longaiph
 Alaxandair tuc anoir bean Minéalus 'na longaibh ;
 Alexander bore from the east the wife of Menelæus in his ships ;

ag sin mar do tóghladh traoí. gidh sgél adbal tre éanmhnaoí
 ag sin mar do tóghladh Traoí, gidh sgél adhbhal : tre éan-mhnaoí.
 for that, Troy was razed, though it is a mighty tale: for one woman.

35. Do luidh loingius acrich greag. ar lorg eléna tre éatt
 Do luidh loingius a crích Gréag ar lorg Ealéana tre éad ;
 A fleet went from the land of Greece to seek Helen through jealousy ;

do cuirsíot ár na ngeargath. do mhilleadh traoí troimtrédach
 do cuirsíot ár na ngéar-ghath ; do milleadh Traoí troim-tréadach.
 they set to slaughter of the sharp pikes ; Troy of the thick flocks was ruined.

36. Long ar fichit cuig cead .x. is é afíor agus ní bréag
 Long ar fichit cúig céad déag — is é a fhíor agus ní bréag —
 A ship and a score, fifteen hundred times — it is the truth of it and no lie —

(25 r.) loingeas na ngreagach tar muir. do toghail traoí ar troighianaibh
 loingeas na nGréagach tar muir do thóghail Traoí ar Troighianaibh
 was the fleet of the Greeks over the sea for the destruction of Troy on the Trojans.

37. Go ttug primh an cloidheamh coir. issin tsighin ó sadorn
 Go ttug Prímh in cloidheamh cóir is in t-sighin ó Shádorn
 And Priam gave the comely sword and the banner from Saturn

deactair go madh moide aneimh. asleagh 7 a cloidheimh
 d'Eachtair go madh móide : a neimh, a shleagh, agus a chloidheimh.
 to Hector so his fury might be greater : his venom, his spear, and his swords.

38. Sé catha deag co fa thrí. ro bhris eachtair um an traoí
 Sé catha déag co fa thrí ro bhris Eachtair um in Traoí
 It was thrice sixteen battles Hector won around Troy

don cloidheamhso do slúagh greg mar innistear tre oiréad
 don cloidheamh-so do shlúagh Grég, mar innistear, tre oiréad.
 with this sword over the host of the Greeks, as is told, in great zeal.

[39. Níor chuir bonn ar bith go ngnaoí. ní léig arún ré na mhnaoí
 Níor chuir bonn ar bith go ngnaoí ; ní léig a rún ré na mhnaoí ;
 There did not put sole to pleasant ground ; there did not let his secret to his wife ;

nir imtig talmain teachtaigh. láoch *mar* eachtair mac prímh
 †níor imthigh talmhain téachtaigh láoch *mar* Eachtair mac Prímh†⁶ (.1.)
 there did not traverse the rich earth a warrior like Hector, son of Priam.

40. On .c. lá do chúaidh eachtair. agcath grégach gan báoghal
 †Ón céad lá do chúaidh Eachtair i gcath Gréagach gan báoghal,
 From the first day that Hector went into the battle of Greeks without peril,

deich .c. míle fo leachtaibh. do laim earcoil a áonair
 deich céad míle fo leachtaibh do láimh Eachtair⁷ a áonair.†
 ten hundred soldiers under grave-mounds by the hand of Hector alone.]

41. Do rochair eachtair tre ceilcc. do comrac aichil airmdearg
 Do-rochair Eachtair tré ceilcc do chomhrac Aichil airm-dearg
 Hector died by treachery at fighting Achilles of scarlet arms

is tuc achloidhiomh dhá éiss. do einías mac ainicheiss
 is tuc a chloidhiomh dhá éis do Einías mac Ainichéis
 and gave his sword after him to Æneas son of Anchises.

42. Ro fagaiph eanás in traolí. do luidh sa neadaille an rí
 Ro fhágaibh Einías in Traolí ; do luidh san Eadail in rí ;
 Æneas left Troy ; the king went into Italy ;

ní beagán do tuit tar lear. issin eadail don cloidheamh
 ní beagán do-tuit tar lear issin Eadail don cloidheamh
 not few were they who fell overseas in Italy by the sword.

43. Fo móir sa neadail do bhí. noch angeibhdís airm acclí
 Fomóir san Eadail do bhí ; noch a ngeibhdís airm a chlí,
 There was a giant in Italy ; arms did not find his vitals,

mac morlaoich gan bheith geanna. dar bainm úargháoth airmdeatla
 mac Mór-laoích gan bheith géanda, dar b'ainm Úargháoth airm-dhéatla
 a son of Morlaoch that was not derided, whose name was Uarghaoth, bold with arms,

44. Do luid chuige eneas ard. ba hé in troighíanach tréngarg
 Do luidh chuige Einías ard ba hé in Troighíanach tréan-gharg ;
 Mighty Æneas went to him ; he was the fierce Trojan warrior ;

ro marph mac morlaoích tar lear. do lean uargháoth don cloidheamh
 ro mharbh mac Mór-laoích tar lear ; do lean Úargháoth don chloidheamh
 he slew the son of Morlaoch overseas ; 'Uarghaoth' stuck to the sword.

45. Da mhac ag eanéas do chloinn. ba húasal íad bá háluind
 Dá mhac ag Einías do chloinn ; ba húasal íad, bá háluind.
 For children, Æneas had two sons ; they were noble, were handsome.

⁶ As Murphy has noted, the second couplet is in *rannaigheacht*, though the poem is in *deibhidhe*.

Furthermore, it is faulty. Professor Gillies has suggested the emendation of the couplet by reárrangement of line d, restoring *deibhidhe* : *laoch mar mac Prímh, mór Eachtair*. For this couplet alone, it is an elegant solution, but the problem of the intrusive *rannaigheacht* is not solved as a whole, because the next couplet is also in the intrusive metre. It is possible that the changes in q. 39 may have caused similar changes to q. 40. That quatrain is not so easily restored. Hence it is likely that the corruption is deeper and the six lines may well be a scribal patch of an illegible or missing portion of his exemplar.

⁷ A scribal slip, the meaning is obvious.

dís geilmhín nar dhúr ré dáimh. silbhí úr & asgán
 dís gheil-mhín nár dhúr ré dáimh Silbhí úr agus Asgán.
 a splendidly fine pair that was not mean to the sages, young Silvius and Ascanius.

46. IN tan tainic seandacht dó. eanéas mór ní hiomorgó
 In tan táinic seandacht dó Einíás mór – ní hiomorgó –
 When senectude was come to him, great Æneas – it is no falsehood –

do ró attiumna díá amhacoibh. óir bá dingna in deaghmhacraidh
 ro-at-tiumna⁸ díá mhacoibh ; óir ba diondgna in deagh-mhacraidh.
 he bequeathed them to his sons ; for preëminent were the good youths.

47. Do roinn eníás ar a grádh. tug dasgán úatha aneadal
 Do-róinn Einíás ar a ghrádh : tug d'Asgán úadha in éadál
 Æneas distributed from his love : he gave to Ascanius the wealth from him

gan dimbrigh ba fearrdha in fear. do silbhí calma in cloidheamh
 gan dímbriḡh – ba feardha in fear ; do Shilbhí calma in cloidheamh.
 without neglect – the man was gallant ; to valiant Silvius, the sword.

48. Tarroidh siluius in láoch. in cloidheamh dar bainm úargháoth
 Tarraidh Siluius in láoch. in cloidheamh dar b'ainm Úargháoth :
 Silvius the warrior obtained the sword whose name was Uarghaoth :

do lín mearrdhacht is mire. is calmacht sa deaghghille
 do lín meardhacht is mire is calmacht sa deagh-ghille.
 activity and liveliness and valour filled in the good lad.

49. Seoluis siluius tar muir. da .c. long go hInis Tuir
 Seoluis Siluius tar muir dá céad long go hInis Tuir,
 Silvius sailed overseas two hundred ships to the Isle of Tor,

is tuc ón inis dhona. bé milis ingean tola
 is tuc ón inis dhona Bé Milis inghean Tola.
 and he took from the wretched isle Bé Milis, daughter of Tol.

(25 v.) 50. Go rug ingean tola mac. do thsílíus na trénghlac
 Go rug inghean Tola mac do Shílbius na tréan-ghlac
 And the daughter of Tol bore a son to Silvius of the strong hands

níul a ainm ahinis tuir. mor athairm is na buillibh
 Níul a ainm i hInis Tuir ; mór a thairm isna buillibh.
 Níul was his name on the Isle of Tor; great his noise in the fray.

51. Is tuc bé milis do níul. uargháoth do rad slóigh anúir
 Is tuc Bé Milis do Níul Úargháoth do-rad slóigh i n-úir ;
 And Bé Milix gave Níul Uarghaoth that cast hosts into the grave ;

⁸ Murphy (DF III, p. 46), suggested *do-róinn*, but the emendation would leave the line hypermetric and fail to explain the nasalisation. *Tiumna* as a noun would also be a modernism, as the older language has *-dh*. If one reads the *at-* as the nasalising infixed pronoun, then *tiumna* comes from the conjunct perfective present stem of *do-immnai*, although the use intended is the preterite ; even if there is MI doubling of the preverb, the emendation is minor. Such a reading is in keeping with the transitional and pseudoarchaising language of the poem.

marb dáire na dhún tar lear. rí na buille don cloidheamh
 marbh Dáire 'na dhún tar lear rí na Buille den chloidheamh.
 Dáire was dead in his stronghold overseas, the King of Buille by the sword.⁹

52.^d IN úair do bhí íuil séasair. attigh níuil ag bé bhéssair
 In úair do bhí íuil Séasair i ttigh Níuil ag Bé Bhéasair
 When Julius Cæsar was with Bé Bhéasair in the house of Níuil

do rad gradh nár ceilteach. dingin rí na ngaiseitreach
 do-rad grádh nár ceilteach d'inghin rígh na nGaiseitreach.
 he gave love that was not concealed to the daughter of the King of the Gaiseitrich.

53. IS tuc níuil inghean dáire. bébhesair ba mór náire
 Is tuc Níuil inghean Dáire Bé Bhéasair — ba mór náire,
 Níuil married Dáire's daughter Bé Bhéasair — great was her modesty,

is ruc bébheassair go mblaidh. íuil séasair airdrigh in domhain
 is ruc Bé Bhéassair go mblaidh íuil Séasair áird-rígh in domhain.
 and Bé Bheassair bore famously Julius Cæsar, High King of the world.

54. Ingean maisseach do bhí ag níuil. caladh ro badh maith arúin
 Ingean maiseach do bhí ag Níuil Caladh ; ro badh maith a rún ;
 Níuil had a graceful daughter Caladh ; her intentions were good ;

griobh geal na ngellamh ngartach. bá he aleanneann lomnachtach
 griobh gheal na ngeal-lámh ngartach, bá hé a leannán Lomnochtach.
 the white knight of generous white hands, Lomnochtach, was her lover.

+

55.¹⁰ +Do luidh caladh for athadh. ruc lé cloidhiomh a hathar
 Do luidh Caladh for athadh ruc lé cloidheamh a hathar ;
 Caladh went in elopement ; she took with her the sword of her father ;

do rat in ríoghan reachtach. an cloidheamh do lomnochtach
 do-rat in ríoghan reachtach in cloidheamh do Lomnochtach.
 the imperious queen gave the sword to Lomnochtach.

léag in rann deighionach so romam mar a ffaiceann tu in chros thuas
 read this quatrain in front of me [the cross] where thou seest the cross above

56. Siris caladh aisgidh mear. ar lomnochtach gear deighfhear
 Siris Caladh aisgidh mear ar Lomnochtach, géar deigh-fhear,
 Caladh demanded a strange present from Lomnochtach, though he was a good man,

tan do ghéphadh a hoigídh. a hainm ar in deaghchloidhimh
 tan do ghéabhadh a hoighidh a hainm ar in deagh-chloidhimh.
 when she should meet her doom, her name [would be] on the good sword.

⁹ Murphy notes that 51c to 53c interrupt the passage and thus may be an interpolation. he reads 51d as ungrammatical ; Mac Neill states (*DF* I, p. lxiii) that he has based his translation on the emendation *iar n-a bhualadh*. An emendation of *ris na builibh*, 'by the blows,' is another possibility.

¹⁰ The MS has omitted a quatrain following 54 and inserted it at the bottom of the page with a scribal note. Mac Neill has made the insertion silently (*DF* I, p.52), but lost his place and himself omitted two quatrains, printed in the corrigenda (*DF* III, p. 435). It has been decided to depart from MacNeill's faulty numbering of the quatrains, because it is simpler to renumber naturally than to continue with an error.

57. Ba marbh caladh do bhreith mheic. issin ffrainge fo garbh agleic
 Ba marbh Caladh do bhreith mheic issin fFrainge fá garbh a gleic ;
 Caladh died bearing a son in France, her struggle was agony ;

ó do fhoiligh úir adath. fa doiligh le lomnactach
 ó do fhoiligh úir a dath, fa doiligh le Lomnochtach.
 when a grave concealed her countenance, it was distressful for Lomnochtach.

58. Ruc lomnachtach nír láoch tim. bean ambroid leis ahérinn
 Ruc Lomnachtach – nír láoch tim — bean i mbroid leis a hÉirinn :
 Lomnachtach took – he was no timid warrior — a wife in bondage with him from Erin :

rioghan ceanncháomh tar fairrge fionncaom ingean deagh cairbre
 ríoghan ceann-cháomh tar fairrge, Fionnchaomh, inghean deagh-Chairbre.
 a comely-faced queen over the wave, Fionnchaomh, daughter of good Cairbre.

59. Ruc lomnochtach da dhún. aningeansin go ndeagrún
 Ruc Lomnochtach dá dhún in inghean sin go ndeagh-rún,
 Lomnochtach took to his stronghold that well-disposed maiden,

is tuc don óig sáoir sheada. asheóid is a taisgeadha
 is tuc don óigh sháoir sheada a sheóid is a thaisgeadha.
 and he gave to the noble, slender virgin his jewels and his treasures.

60. Fúair lomnochtach fi fa thuinn. gur leannán di cú chulainn
 Fhuair Lomnochtach fí fá thuinn, gur leannán di Cú Chulainn
 Lomnochtach received an evil from over the wave, for her lover was Cú Chulainn

ba mían leis in cú gan gháoi. do mharbhadh tre na mormhnaoi
 ba mian leis in cú gan gháoi do mharbhadh tre n-a mhór-mhnaoi.
 he desired that hound without guile to kill on account of his great wife.

61. Tainicséin oídhche samhna. do mharbhadh shlóigh na heamhna
 Táinic-séin oídhche Shamhna do mharbhadh shlóigh na hEamhna
 He did come upon Samhain night to slay the host of Eamhain

do bhreit coscair chon chúailgne. sdo loscadh na craobhrúaidhe
 do bhreith coscair Chon Chúailgne 's do loscadh na Craobh-Rúaidhe.
 to take spolia of Cuailgne's hound and to burn the Red-Branch.

62. Tainic lomnochtach sa tír. an curaidh ba borb abrígh
 Táinic Lomnochtach sa tír in curaidh – ba borb a bhrígh —
 Lomnochtach came to the country, the hero – fierce was his power —

ba lór do churaidh na cheann. ulaidh & fir éireann
 ba lór do churaidh 'na cheann : Ulaidh agus fir Éireann.
 sufficient was the troop to face him : the Ulaidh and men of Erin.

(26 r.) 63. Tarla tríar ar aire. ag toigheacht tar tráigh mbaile
 Tarla tríar ar a aire, ag toigheacht tar tráigh, 'ma le¹¹ :
 It happened that a trio were watching for him, coming to the strand, together :

cú na gcleas láoghaire ón linn. is muinreamar mac eirrghinn
 Cú na gCleas, Láoghaire ón linn, is Muinreamhar mac Eirrghinn.
 Cú na gCleas, Laoghaire from the pool and Muinreamhar son of Eirrgheann.

¹¹ MS ungrammatical. Possible oral reinterpretation?

64. Teithidh *laoghaire* nír chóir. mur do connaire in fomhóir
 Teithidh *Laoghaire* – nír chóir — mur do connaire in fomhóir ;
Laoghaire flees – it was not seemly — as he saw the giant ;

cláochlais deilbh mhuinreamhair mhir. amhoil richt mhairbh inuairsin
 cláochlais deilbh Mhuinreamhair mhir amhoil richt mhairbh in uair sin.
 The colours of spirited Muinreamhar changed like the appearance of the dead at that time.

65. Abair a mhuinreamhair mhir. ro ráidh bricne ré bhrathair
 'Abair, a Mhuinreamhair mhir,' ro ráidh Bricne ré bhrathair,
 'Say thou, O spirited Muinreamhar,' said Bricne to his brother,

créad ruc do cheill uait go grinn. & ro cláochlaidh hinntinn
 'créad ruc do cheill uait go grinn ocus ro cláochláidh th'inntinn ?
 'what has borne off thy sharp wit from thee and has changed thy disposition ?

66. Do ríne in fomhóir dith thim. amhuinreamhair mhic eirrghinn
 Do-rinne in fomhóir dít thim, a Mhuinreamhair mhic Eirrghinn ;
 The giant made of thee a tenderfoot, O Muinreamhar son of Eirrgheann ;

rél damh ar chnámhaibh do chinn. nach fear lámhaigh thú aneirinn
 réil damh, ar chnámhaibh do chinn, nach fear lámhaigh thú i nÉirinn.'
 clear to me, by the bones of thy head, is that thou art no ready-handed man in Erin.'

67. Ro threicc mhuinreamhor a airm. do chúaidh *laoghaire* a lúath mhaidhm
 Ro thréicc Mhuinreamhar a airm ; do chuaidh Láoghaire i lúath-mhaidhm ;
 Muinreamhar forsook his arms ; *Laoghaire* went into pell-mell flight ;

muinreamhor nír fear fearrdha. nó láoghaire loinneardha
 Muinreamhar níor fear fearrdha nó Láoghaire loinneardha.
 Muinreamhar was no virile man, nor was *Laoghaire* brilliant.

68. Gidh dhuitsi aláoghaire luinn. gan congnam lé coin qlainn
 'Gidh dhuit-si,' a Láoghaire luinn, 'gan congnamh le Coin Culainn
 'What is it with thee,' O strong *Laoghaire*, 'not to aid Cú Chulainn,

is hé na áonor on tóir. ag comrac frissin fhomhoir
 is hé na áonor ón tóir ag cómrac frissin fhomhoir ?
 and he alone from the flight combating the giant ?'

69. A muinreamhair ná bí mur taoí. óir ní hinmhuin tú lead mhnáoi
 'A Mhuinreamhair ná bí mur taoí, óir ní hionmhuin tú led mhnáoi,
 'O Muinreamhar, be not as thou art, for not beloved art thou to thy wife,

aithnigh do cách *mar* ata tú. eirigh cuir dhít do míchlú
 aithnigh do cách *mar* atá tú : éirigh cuir dhít do mí-chlú.'
 'tis known to all how thou art : arise thou, put from thee thy shame.'

70. Seoluis muinreamhar muir bhorb. nó go ttainic go dún mbolg
 Seoluis Muinreamhar muir bhorb nó¹² go ttáinic go Dhún mBolg,
 Muinreamhar sailed the rough sea, until he came to Dún Bolg,

co ttuc leis na seóid tar linn. go rainic co conquinn
 co ttuc leis na seóid tar linn go ráinic co Con Culainn.
 and he took with him the treasures across the waters until he reached Cú Chulainn.

¹² Meaningless, perhaps added in a scribal attempt to provide a syllable to a line already faulty in his exemplar.

71. Do roinn cuculainn na seóid. ar mathaibh uladh gan mhóid
 Do-roinn Cú Culainn na seóid ar mathaibh Uladh gan mhóid ;
 Cú Chulainn distributed the treasures, to the nobles of Uladh unrestrainedly ;

amhlaidh tuc íatt gan anadh. gan abheag do muinreamhair
 amhlaidh tuc íatt gan anadh gan a bheag do Mhuinreamhair.
 thus he gave them without delay without a bit for Muinreamhar.

72. In cloidheamh díá sloighthe slóigh. tuc cuculainn do mhac róigh
 In cloidheamh díá slaighthe slóigh tuc Cú Chulainn do mhac Róigh ;
 The sword whereby hosts would be smitten, Cú Chulainn gave to the son of Róich ;

ba mór afeidm accathborb. tucc dfeargus in caladh colg
 ba mór a feidm i ccath borb ; tucc d'Fheargus in Caladh-cholg.
 great was its use in fierce battle ; he gave Feargus Caladh's Fury.^c

73. Do chódar ulaidh anáigh. analbain tre iomarbháid
 Do chódar Ulaidh an-áigh i nAlbain tre iomarbháigh
 The most valiant Ulaidh went to Alba because of a dispute

díá ttucatar cath go mbúaidh. do clannuibh ailli Adhnúaill
 díá ttucatar cath go mbúaidh do chlannuibh áilli Adhnúaill.
 where they gave a battle successfully to the handsome children of Adhnuall.

74. Tuc feargus in buille borb. asa laimh don caladh colc
 Tuc Feargus in buille borb as a laimh don Caladh-cholc ;
 Feargus gave a sharp blow from his hand with Caladh's Fury ;

seacht ccead nirdimbúaidh ag dol. & ibhual don cloidhiomh
 seacht ccéad – níor dímbúaidh, ag dol – ocus Iobhual — don chloidhiomh.
 seven hundred – it was no discomfiture, going – plus Iobhual — to the sword.

75. Tuc mac róigh buille curadh. accath ilgháireach uladh
 Tuc mac Róigh buille curadh i ccath il-gháireach Uladh
 The son of Róich gave a warrior's blow in the battle of much-shouting Ulaidh

dar teasc feargus ba gniom gle. na teóra máola midhe
 dar theasc Feargus – ba gníomh glé — na teóra máola Midhe.
 whereby Feargus cut down – it was a shining deed — the three bald pates of Midhe.

76. Seacht ccead .x. láoch go fa dhó. do luidh acoll tar muir mór
 Seacht ccéad déag láoch go fa dhó, do luidh Acall tar muir mór
 Seventeen hundred warriors twice over [accompanying] Acall went over the great sea,

geill éirionn uile go ngus. tucadh cuige go dúrlus
 géill Éirionn uile go ngus tucadh cuige go nDúrlus.
 the hostages of all Erin mightily were brought to him at Durlus.

(26 v.) 77. Luidhsíot fir eiriond uile. go teamhraigh na náonchuire
 Luidhsíot fir Éiriond uile go Teamhraigh 'na n-áon-chuire
 All the men of Erin went to Teamhair in a single group,

maráon is cathbhoidh glan gle. do cinneadh dhóibh comairle
 mar áon is Cathbhadh glan glé do cinneadh dhóibh comairle.
 along with Cathbhadh shining bright a plan was decided for them.

78. Do luidh cathbhoidh uatha alle. do feachain afheassa fíre
Do luidh Cathbhoidh uatha alle d'fhéachain a fheasa fíre ;
Cathbhadh went from them yonder to attend to his knowledge of truth ;

ní ffuil aneirinn ro feas. acht aoínfhear comlainn choisceas
[Cathbhadh:] 'ní ffuil i nÉirinn, ro-feas, acht aoín-fhear cómhlainn, choisce-fheas.'
[Cathbhadh:] 'there is not in Erin, I wit, but a single man of combat, a hindering knowledge.'

79. Cuich in taoínfearsin go mbúaidh. dfearaibh éirionn comlainn crúaidh
[Fir Éireann:] 'Cúich in t-aoín-fhear sin go mbuaidh d'fhearaibh Éirionn cómhlainn chrúaidh ?
[Men of Erin:] 'Who is that one victorious man of the men of Erin of hard combat ?

ar do dhraóidheachtsa go mbloidh. innis dhúinn go fír achathbhaidh
ar do dhraóidheacht-sa go mbloidh innis dhúinn go fír, a Chathbhaidh.'
by thy famed druidry, tell us truly, O Cathbhadh.'

80. An meisi é ar conall cain. ar mac amhra aimhirghin
'An méisi é ?' ar Conall cain ar mac amhra Aimhirghin ;
'Is it I ?' quoth gentle Conall, quoth the wondrous son of Aimhirghin ;

an meise é ar cú na gcleas. in missi hé bar feargus
'An meise é ?' ar Cú na gCleas ; 'In missi hé ?' bar Feargus.
'Is it I ?' quoth Cú na gCleas ; 'Is it I ?' quoth Feargus.

81. Ané cú rí nár lúaidh gaoí. ané fíamhain mac foraoí
'An é Cú Rí, nár luaidh gaoí ?' 'An é Fíamhain mac Foraoí ?'
'Is it Cú Rí, who never spake falsehood ?' 'Is it Fiamhain son of Foraoi ?'

ané naoíse na narm náigh. ané fear díadh mac damháin
'An é Naoíse na n-arm n-áigh ?' 'An é Fear Díadh mac Damháin ?'
Is it Naoise of the victorious arms ? 'Is it Fear Diadh son of Damhain ?'

82. Ní lámhann neach úaibhse é. in tacall úd is glan gné
[Cathbhadh:] 'Ní lámhann neach úaibh-se é in t-Acall úd is glan gné
[Cathbhadh:] 'None of you tackles him, yon Acall who is of bright countenance.

ro tairngireadh dhó tre ghoil. co mbíadh na ardrigh oraibh
ro tairngireadh dhó tre ghoil co mbiadh 'na ard-righ oraibh.
It was prophesied of him through war-frenzy that he should be High King over you.

83. Tabhairse comhairle dhúin achathbhaidh is ró ghlan rúin
[Fir Éireann:] 'Tabhair-se comhairle dhúin a Chathbhaidh is ró-ghlan rúin,
[Men of Erin:] 'Give us counsel, O Cathbhadh of ultra-bright mysteries,

an fearr geill do dol amach. no cath crodha ceadfadhach
an fearr géill do dol amach no cath cródha céadfadhach ?
whether it is better that hostages go off or brave, intrepid battle ?'

84. Ní náir dhaoíbhse geill dó. afhira eirionn ní ró
[Cathbhadh:] 'Ní náir dhaoíbh-se géill dó, a fhira Éirionn, ní ró ;
[Cathbhadh:] 'Hostages to him are no shame to you, men of Erin, no excess ;

is fir in beatha buidhe. ar ngialladh don áon dhuine
is fir in beatha buidhe ar ngialladh don áon-dhuine.'
the men of the pleasant world have submitted to the same man.'

85. Adeirim ar conall cain. ar mac oirdhirc aimhirghin
'Adeirim,' ar Conall cain, ar mac oirdhirc Aimhirghin,
'I say,' quoth gentle Conall, quoth the illustrious son of Aimhirghin,

geill uladh ní raghaid amach. ar aga na nallmurrach
géill Uladh ní raghaid amach ar aga na n-allmurrach.'
'the hostages of Uladh shall not go off' despite the foreigners.'

86. Dar do láimhsi aconuill cain. amheic oirdhirc aimhirghin
[Cathbhadh:] 'Dar do láimh-si, a Chonuill chain, a mheic oirdhirc Aimhirghin,
[Cathbhadh:] 'By thy hand, O gentle Conall, O illustrious son of Aimhirghean,

gidhmaith do láimh accath lonn. nocha cinnfir ar a chomlann
gidh maith do láimh i ccath lonn, nocha cinnfir ar a chómhlan.
although thy hands are good in fierce battle, thou wilt not surpass him at his duel.'

87. Badh ettrom gheba sé dhibh.¹³ acht go ngoirtear agairm rígh
Badh étrom ghébha sé dhíbh acht go ngairthear a ghairm rígh ;
It would be lightly he shall hold you, if only his title of king be proclaimed ;

nocha ngabhann gell go borb. acht mé féin sa caladhcolg
nocha ngabhann géill go borb, acht mé féin 's a Caladh-cholg'...¹⁴
he will not take hostages severely, only myself and his Caladh's Fury'...

88. Ag sin apadruic uile. achinn slóigh na sochaidhe
Ag sin, a Phádraic, uile, a chinn slóigh na sochaidhe ;¹⁵
That is all, O Patrick, O chief of the host of the multitude ;

fada bearuidh is tú ar neimh. cuid do sgélaibh in chloidhimh
fada béaruid is tú ar neimh cuid do sgélaibh in chloidhimh.
long they shall keep, and thou, in Heaven, some of the tales of the sword.

89. Sé bliadhna déacc is céad. boí sé ag feargus ní bréag
Sé bliadhna déacc is céad bhoí sé ag Feargus – ní bréag,
Sixteen years and a hundred Feargus had it – it is no lie,

gur tuit in curaidh ba grind. lé lughaidh lé dall oillill
gur thuit in curaidh ba grind le Lughaidh le dall Oilill.
until the hero who was steadfast fell by Lughaidh, by Oilill's blind-man.

90. Ó ro tuit feargus nach ffann. tarroidh meadhbh in ríghland
Ó ro thuit Feargus – nach ffann — tarroidh Meadhbh in rígh-land ;
From when Feargus – who is not feeble – fell, Meadhbh gained the royal blade ;

& gin gur maith in ciall. cloidheamh fearguis tuc dírial
ocus gin gur maith in chiall, cloidheamh Fearguis tuc d'írial.
and although the reason was not good, the sword of Feargus she gave to Irial.

¹³ The words are written *dibh sé* in the MS, but marked for transposition.

¹⁴ The text suffers a lacuna here ; the episode is not completed.

¹⁵ A Latinism, *majores* for 'the multitudes,' but also used euphemistically for 'the departed,' considering what follows. The more usual phrase is *rí na bpobal* in the lays ; cf. SCA q. 117 & SCP q. 121.

(27 r.) 91. Do luidh írial aheamhoin. ar cúairt alochluinn leabhair
 Do luidh Írial a hEamhain ar chúairt i Lochluinn leabhair,
 Irial went from Eamhain on a circuit in extensive Lochlann,

dfios sgél na beirbhe ar agrádh. sdo dextrín deilbhi aleannáin
 d'fhios sgél na Beirbhe ar a ghrádh 's do déichsin deilbhi a leannáin.
 to learn news in Beirbhe of his desire and to see the appearance of his lover.

92. Leannán meic conaill cearnaigh. ingean lugháine meanmnaigh
 Leannán meic Conaill Cearnaigh inghean Lugháine meanmnaigh,
 The love of a son of Conall Cearnach for the daughter of courageous Lugháine,

mór asochra robadh borb. tuc na tochra in caladh cholg
 mór a sochra ; ro badh borb ; tuc 'na tochra in Caladh-cholg.
 great was her profit ; she was sharp ; he gave in her wooing the Caladh's Fury.

93. O thairraidh lughaine lonn. caladh cholg crúaidh na ccomhland
 Ó tharraidh Lugháine lonn Caladh-cholg crúaidh na ccómhland ;
 When brave Lugháine gained hard Caladh's Fury of the duels ;

do rad ainm ar in loinn. in fad ro boí alochluinn
 do-rad a ainm ar in loinn in fad ro boí i Lochluinn.
 he gave his name to the blade for the time it was in Lochlann.

94. Deaghamac tuire na nglonn. do marbh lughaine accomlann
 Deagh-mhac Tuire na nglonn do mharbh Lugháine i ccómhlann ;
 A good son of Tuire of the exploits killed Lugháine in a duel ;

on ló do rochair in fear. do lean a ainm don chloidheamh
 ón ló do-rochair in fear, do lean a ainm don chloidheamh.
 from the day the man fell, his name adhered to the sword.

95. Meinic rot bíatha bran ar corpoibh teanna treinfhear
 Meinic rot bíathá bran ar corpoibh teanna tréin-fhear,
 Often thou didst feed a raven, on the stiff corpses of warriors,

ríeamh nír gabhadh réd bhuille. ólaimh leabhair lughaini
 ríamh níor gabhadh réd bhuille ó láimh leabhair Lugháini.
 never did one block thy blow from the long arm of Lugháine.

96. Sé bliadhna .x. & céad. do bhoí alochlandaibh ní bréag
 Sé bliadhna déag agus céad do bhoí i Lochlandaibh — ní bréag,
 Sixteen years and a hundred it was in Lochlann — it is no lie,

gur éirig eimhear alpa. an gheag aloinn fír ghasta
 gur éirigh Eimhear Alpa in ghéag áloinn, fíor-ghasta.
 until Eimhear Alpa arose, the handsome, truly clever stripling.

97. INgean ag eimhear alpa. óigbhean alainn fhíorghasta
 Inghean ag Eimhear Alpa óig-bhean álainn fhíor-ghasta ;
 Eimhear Alpa had a daughter, a comely, truly clever lass ;

ba hé ahainm béthuinne. rioghan breasoil bharr bhuidhe
 ba hé ahainm Bé Thuinne, ríoghan Breasoil bharr-bhuidhe.
 her name was Bé Thuinne, the tawny-haired queen of Breasal.

98. Mac breasail is bé thuinne. nír gabhadh ré aláochbhuille
 Mac Breasail is Bé Thuinne — nír gabhadh ré a láoch-bhuille —
 A son of Breasal and Bé Thuinne — none withstood his warrior's blow —

deiar bainm áongus gaoí fuileach. ó mbiath bádbh go bithbhuidheach
 darbh ainm Áonghus Gaoí Fuileach ó mbiath Bádbh go bith-bhuidheach.
 whose name was Aonghus Gaoi Fuileach, from whom Bádbh¹⁶ used to be ever-indebted.

99. Baineachlach fhinn na féine. eachlach dhubh induibhshléibhe
 Bain-eachlach Fhinn na féine Eachlach dhubh in duibh-shléibhe,
 The woman-courier of Fionn of the Fian, dark Eachlach of the Black Mountain,

gear mhaith alathar ar ló. ba mathair hí do cuinnsleó
 géar mhaith a láthar ar ló ba mhathair hí do chuinnsleó.
 although her disposition was good once, she was the mother to combat.

100. Ruc aneachlach lé tar muir. go háongus go seanathair
 Ruc in Eachlach lé tar muir go hÁonghus go sean-athair.
 Eachlach took with it overseas to Aonghus, to her grandfather

don loinn roighéir nír chomhdha. dol accomlann fheardomhna
 don loinn roi-ghéir — nír chomhgha — dol i ccomhlann Fhear Domhna.
 for the very sharp blade — it was not safe — to go to combat the Fir Dhomhna.

101. Nochar gabhadh read beim ríamh. accath accomlann anglíadh
 Nochar gabhadh read béim ríamh i ccath, i ccómhlann, i nglíadh ;
 None blocked thy blow ever in battle, in duel, in tumult ;

rob tú ríghlann na cruinne. gorod bris ceann na caillighe
 rob tú rígh-lann na cruinne, go rod bhris ceann na caillighe.
 thou wast king blade of the world, until the head of the witch broke thee.

102. O do ríghneadh dhe da chuid. lughaidhe ar áongus go mbloidh
 Ó do ríghneadh dhe dá chuid, lughaide ar Áonghus go mbloidh ;
 From when it was made into two parts, lesser thence did Aonghus like it ;

fo mana cosccair is cneadh. do rad dosgar in cloidhiomh
 fo mana cosccair is cneadh ; do-rad d'Osgar in cloidhiomh.
 it was an omen of downfall and agony ; he gave Oscar the sword.

103. Gear maith laim osgair re headh. no go ttarraidh in cloidheamh
 Géar mhaith lámh Osgair re headh no go ttarraidh in cloidheamh,
 Although Oscar's hand was good thereto, until he gained the sword,

ris nír gabhadh ina dhiáigh soin. in gein ron buí na beathaidh
 ris nír gabhadh ina dhiáigh soin in gcéin ron buí 'na bheathaidh.
 he was never blocked thereafter, in the time that he was his in life.

104. Sé chéad láoch go fa cheatair. sé fichit rí accathaibh
 Sé chéad láoch go fa cheathair, sé fichit rí i ccathaibh,
 Six hundred warriors four times, six score of kings in battalions,

is fiche míle míad ngal. do marbh osgar don chloidheamh
 is fiche míle — míad ngal — do mharbh Osgar don chloidheamh.
 and a score thousand — a respectable conflict — Oscar killed with the sword.

¹⁶ Either the Battle-goddess, or as a common noun, the vulture.

105. On chead cath do cuireadh dhe. go cath mor chuile dreimhni
 Ón chéad chath do cuireadh dhe go cath mór Chúile Dreimhni,
 From the first battle fought with it to the great battle of Cúl Dreimhne,

ata leam a adhearbhadh dhuibh. go marbhadh séimhe subhaigh
 atá leam a adhearbhadh dhuibh, go marbhadh séimhe subhaigh.
 I have its verification for you that civil, cheerful men were slain.

(27 v.) 106. Do chead cloidhmhe na cruinde. an seanóir ba baile buille
 Do chéad chloidhmhe na cruinde in seanóir – ba baile a buille ;
 Of the world's chief swords, the elder – effective was its stroke ;

beannach é apatraic na peann. asé sút gearr na ccolann
 beannach é, a Phátraic na bpeann asé súd Gearr na cColann.
 bless it, O Patrick of the pens, yon is the Short One of the Bodies.

107. Mallacht ar giolla anghabhann. olc do rec gearr na gcollann
 Mallacht ar giolla in ghabhann olc do rec Gearr na gColann
 A curse on the smith's lad ; foully he sold the Short One of Bodies

athais ar do chorp afhir. olc do reacais in cloidhimh
 aithis ar do chorp, a fhir : olc do reacais in cloidhimh.
 a pox on thy body, O man : foully thou sold the sword.

108. Cuir in cloidheamhsin dot chris. acleircin bhig dom chráidhis
 Cuir in cloidheamh sin dot chris a chleircín bhig : dom chráidhis ;
 Put that sword from thy belt, O little clericlet : thou tormentedest me ;

sgarsa rissin ccolg neimhe. is lean dot tordcleirchidhe
 sgar-sa rissin ccolg neimhe is lean dot ord-cléirchidhe.
 part thou with the venomous blade and adhere thou to thy ecclesiastical order.

109. O tainic corraighe an doill. dar anmain chaoílte & finn
 Ó tháinic corraighe in Doill dar anmain Chaoílte is Finn,
 Since the disturbance of the Blind Man is come, by the souls of Caoilte and of Fionn,

muna adeachaidh máolchíar amach. muirbfeat go dían in clearach
 muna deachaidh Máol Chíar amach, marbhfat go dian in cléireach.
 unless Maol Chiar has gone away, I shall slay the cleric immediately.

110. Brisda mo chroidhe is mé dall. úch uch apatraic na peann
 Brisde mo chroidhe, is mé dall, úch, úch, a Phátraic na bpeann ;
 Broken is my heart, and I am blind, alas, alas, O Patrick of the pens ;

cloidheamh mo mheic ag máol chíar. rod cuir in gheilt ar in ríean
 cloidheamh mo mheic ag Máol Chíar rod chuir in gheilt ar in rían.
 Maol Chiar has my son's sword ; which put him, the coward, into the grave.

111. Ge lionmhar éire mar tá. eidir fhior is mac is mhná
 Ge líonmhar Éire mar tá eidir fhiora is mhaca is mhná,
 Although Erin is populated as it is, between men and sons and women,

uch is mó do marbh thrá. achleirchin don cloidheamhsa
 uch is mó do marbhadh thrá, a chléirchín, don chloidheamh-sa.
 Alas, more have been slain indeed, O clericlet, by this sword.

112. Gidh mór do chuir do chosgar. on ló rainic go hosgar
 [Pátraic:] Gidh mór do chuir do chosgar ón ló ráinic go hOsgar,
 [Patrick:] However many it put to slaughter from the day it came to Oscar,

tug mé fa mhéala don moigh. mar at feat sgél ancloidhimh
 tug mé fa mhéala don moigh mar at-féat sgél in cloidhimh.
 it has borne me in pity to the plain when he tells the tale of the sword

113. Aitchim in cuimhdhe osar gcionn. nar tarrustar ar mac Finn
 Aitchim in cuimhdhe osar gcionn nár tarrustar ar mac Finn
 I beg the Lord above us that there not befall the son of Fionn

andeanim do dhéaraibh dhuibh. is me ag féaghain an chloidhimh
 a ndéanaim do dhéaraibh dhuibh, is mé ag féaghain in chloidhimh.
 all that I make of tears for you, as I behold the sword.

===A chloidhimh===

Notes

‘Murphy suggests ‘Tiobha wrought the sword’ (*DF* III, p. 45, n. 3a). This is a joke, as it means ‘Havoc wrought the sword,’ a delightful inversion.

‘MacNeill translated ‘sloe-trees’. Sloe / blackthorn is the usual for *draighean*, but nothing about the shrub is red — not fruit, blossom, leaves, nor stalk. The modern Irish *draighean mara*, the sea buckthorn, has red fruit and grows on cliffs, and thus fits the description. Unfortunately, it is native to Britain, but not Ireland ; the author cannot locate a date of its introduction. *Ruaidh* is therefore likely meant to be taken in its extended sense, making the phrase functionally equivalent to ‘a formidable tangle.’

‘The names here are used as a pun, for not only has Mana given Trost the sword, but, as noted in the index the names are also common nouns: Mana is ‘Omen’ and Trost is ‘Noise,’ rendering the couplet ‘Omen gave Noise the sword, it was not a portent for its silence.’ Murphy explains the pun (*DF* III, p. 45, n. 16a,b) with suggestions for a possible emendation.

‘The jump from the Classical epics to Julius Cæsar appears to be based on a word-play or misunderstanding of Gaelicisation of names. Ascanius is also known as Iulus, which would give a Gaelic *Iul*, likely declined as an *o*-stem noun with a genitive *Iuil*. Julius gives *Iuil* as a nominative. There is also an apocryphal son of Silvius named Iulius in an Old Irish fragment, who migrates to Gaul and is an ancestor of the Britons (Kuno Meyer, ‘Silvius, Stammvater der Britten,’ *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* XII [1918], p. 376). There is considerable room for the author to be confused or to take advantage of confusion. Further discussion of this point may be found in part I, ch. IX.

‘*Caladh-cholg*: See Murphy’s note (*DF* III, p. 46, n. 70d). The sword name is certainly not unique to this lay. It means ‘*tough-blade*,’ but a warrior Caladh (‘Tough’) had it in some Ulster tales ; a sword already current in the heroic literature has been drawn into this lay.

Language

The following forms are worthy of note

N.B. The numbers of all notes by Murphy beyond 55 are off by two compared to these which follow hereafter because Mac Neill omitted qq. 56 and 57 from his edition.

Id do sgarais, unnecessary *do* with the *s*-preterite. Likely modernisation of *ro-*.

- 2c *do chaídh*, from *caídid*, a MG form of *ciíd*.
- 3a *do-róine*, long-o forms of the preterite of *do-gní*, originally from the passive, are most common in the MG period, and well attested in the *Vita Tripartita*, whence the majority of the citations of these forms in *DIL*. A derivative of earlier *do-rónai*, the present with *ro-* for a consuetudinal is also possible, but such forms would be long since confused by Late Middle Gaelic.
- 5c *brosgur*, noted by Murphy as an especially early word, it appears not only as 'clamour,' as Murphy's note translates it, but also as 'destruction,' a usage noted as late as Céitinn.
- 7b *sceile*, Murphy suspected the word ceased to be used by the Classical period, but it is an example in declension § 2 in *IGT*.
- 7c *nocha*, disyllabic copula
- 8c *gur chossain tú*, a from *con-sní* ; the object is an accusative pronoun
- 9a *tarraidh*, later simple verb
- 9c *níor*, later monosyllabic form
- 10d *do-rad*, older pret. of *do-bheir*
- 11a *tarraidh*, later simple verb
- 13a *ro luidh*, supp. preterite of *téit* with superfluous *ro-* as a substitute for perf. *do-coïd*
- 13b *for*, older prepositional form not frequently preserved in *DF*
- 13c *go ro*, modern *gur*
- 15a *beiris*, *beirid* should take a *t*-preterite *birt*, *-bert*. MG use of the *s*-preterite is mentioned in *DIL*, but no exempla are cited. The use is no sign of great lateness, as there are two in *Aisling Mac Con Glinne*, ll. 620 & 1129. No preterites of any sort are given in *IGT*, verbal paradigm § 13, but the use of the form in Classical verse is attested in Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (poem XX, q. 28a).
- 16b *nochar*, disyllabic copula
- 19b *ro bo*, another disyllabic copula form
- 19d *é*, independent accusative pronoun
- 21a *tugsat*, note that the older active ending is retained
- 22a *ros tiódhlaic*, infixed pronoun is used with meaning, although the *s* is used, against OG as masc.
- 24a *do-rochair*, an excellent old perfect of *do-tuit*. One must, however note that since the form is common in the older tales, it had a long *Nachleben* ; the form *ad-rochair* is found in *IGT* verb § 21 in the examples. In the same line, *níor* is a later form of the copula.
- 25d *do leig*, the object 'him' is unexpressed, an infixed pronoun may have dropped out
- 26d *tóigébhtar*, the older future stem of *do-fócaib* used here is not in the Classical language, where only odd verbal nouns derived from several older stems are presented in *IGT* verbal paradigm § 108
- 27b *do-rad... mnaoí*, suppletive preterite of *do-bheir* with its object in the accusative, verified by rhyme
- 29a *do-rónsad*, a good plural *s*-preterite of *do-gní*
- 30b *ros togaibh*, redundant infixed pronoun
- 31b *mar hí*, a modernism
- 35a *do luid*, preterite of *téit*, its perfective use is a MG development for the older perfect in *do-coïd*
- 35c *do cuirsiot*, plural *s*-preterite with unnecessary *do*
- 39a,b, both begin with the monosyllabic form *níor* ; the quatrain is unquestionably corrupt, because lines c,d and q. 40 are in *rannaigheacht* metre and thus an interpolation. It is interesting to note that these quatrains have very conservative spelling, apart from *gcath* in 40b.
- 41a *do-rochair*, old perfect of *do-tuit*, cf. note 24a above
- 42b *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 42c *do-tuit*, either an old present, or a halfway step in the preterite to the modern regular simple verb. The old perfect *do-rochair* cannot be used for metrical reasons here, but the old preterite *do-ceir* could.

- 43b *nocha*, disyllabic form preserved
- 43c *geanna*, obscure, from *génda*, derived from *gén* 'mockery.' Mac Neill tried to derive it from Latin *gens*, an translated 'without being similar' and Murphy did not correct him.
- 44a *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 45c *dís*, loss of hiatus
- 46c *co ro-at-tiumna*, conjunct perfective present of *do-immnai* with typical MG doubling of preverbs. The 3pl. infixed pronoun is correct. Murphy emended *do-róin a thiumna*, which introduces a modernism of the verbal noun *tiomnadh* losing *-dh*, a slip not seen elsewhere in the poem or MS.
- 46d *diondgna*, a word suggestive of MG, as it is used in that period to mean 'something with preëminence,' but later restricted in meaning to a tomb or burial mound.
- 47 *do-róinn*, from *do-gní*
- 48a *tarraidh*, later simple verb
- 51 *do-rad*, from *do-bheir*
- 52c *do-rad*, from *do-bheir*
- 55a *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 55c *do-rat*, from *do-bheir*
- 63a *tarla* used independently in place of *do-rala*
- 64a *nír*, monosyllabic form
- 66a *do-rinne*, the later form of the preterite of *do-gní*
- 67c *níor*, monosyllabic form
- 68d *frissin*, older preposition
- 70c *co ttuc*, *co* as a conjunction
- 71a *do-roinn*, preserved *o* in the preterite of *do-gní*
- 71c *anadh*, an uncertain usage, vid. *anad* in *DIL*
- 71c *iatt*, independent accusative pronoun
- 73a *do chódar*, modern deponent-derived ending, but the long-*o* forms are common in MG
- 73c *ttucatar*, later deponent ending used
- 74c *níor*, later monosyllabic form
- 75d *na teóra máola*, older feminine use ; later a masculine
- 76b *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 77a *luidhsiot*, an odd plural attempt, as any number of the normal preterites would have fit e.g. *lotar*. To place a new preterite on the single most common irregular verb apart from the copula suggests that the creator of the form was far removed from any *t*-preterites in the living language.
- 78a *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 78a *alle*, an early word, OG *allae*
- 78c *ro-feas*, as a perfect 1s of *ro-fítir*, the simplification of the verbal system in the loss of the old deponent conjugation is again seen. This particular form is not found in Stokes' *Agallamh* ; cf. Nuner, p. 239.
- 82a, *é*, independent accusative pronoun
- 86d *nocha*, disyllabic copula
- 87c *nocha ngabhann*, the disyllabic negative is preserved, but the later dependent present ending is used with it.
- 89b *bhoí sé*, an analytic form. It is likely that the *sé* is a scribal addition after forgetting *do*.
- 89c *gur thuit*, the later regular simple verb is used
- 90a *ro thuit*, the later regular simple verb is used
- 90b *tarroidh*, late simple verb from *do-srenga*
- 91a *do luidh*, from *téit*
- 93a *thairraidh*, later simple verb from *do-srenga*
- 93c *do-rad*, from *do-bheir*
- 94c *do-rochair*, from *do-tuit*
- 95a *rot bíathá*, good infixed pronoun

- 95c *níor*, later monosyllabic form
- 98b *níor*, later monosyllabic form
- 100c *níor*, later monosyllabic form
- 101a *nochar*, disyllabic negative
- 101c *rob tú*, uninflected copula
- 101d *go rod bhris*, infixed pronoun with full meaning, *go* as conjunction
- 102d *do-rad*, from *do-bheir*
- 103b *tarraidh*, later simple verb from *do-srenga*
- 103c *níor*, later monosyllabic negative preverb
- 103d *in gcéin ron buí*, nasalising relative clause.
- 106c *é*, independent accusative pronoun
- 107b *do rec*, a late back formation from *renaid* via its verbal noun
- 107d *do reacaís*, another back formation from *renaid* via its verbal noun
- 108b *dom chráidhis*, a good infixed pronoun, but one would not expect the *-is* in the dependent.
- 109s *marbhfat*, later form of the future 1s ending with petrified suffix pronoun
- 110d *rod chuir*, a good infixed pronoun
- 112d *at-féat*, a good early deuterotonic form
- 113a,b *gcionn : Finn*, bad rhyme or bad genitive

Prof. Murphy notes that 'Though in places the language of this poem resembles Middle Irish, the main portion of it can hardly have been written till after the Middle Irish period' (*DF* III, p. 43). The evidence that Murphy used is largely in the large number of nominative forms used in place of accusatives and that these nominatives are backed by rhyme or syllabic constraints of the metre. The list of them is long, and unworthy of full individual notice ; they are found in qq. 1, 3, 5, 47, 58, 67, 70, 71, and 90. An accusative backed by rhyme is found only at 27. One may note that the preverb *ro-* is especially well preserved throughout this lay. There are several accusative pronouns, yet the infixed pronoun is overall well preserved.

It is on the single phrase that he noted as *in gcéin ronbui* q. 103d that Murphy centred his argument. Notably, he has rewritten the phrase, which the MS gives as *in gein ronbuí*. *In gein* appears to be a frozen phrase here, as the initial is forgotten ; the simplest explanation is a scribal modification of the text. There are further problems in the line. If the *a* in '*na*' is masculine, it should lenite *beathaidh*. The phrase has too many simple errors, rather than monstrosities, to be a pseudoarchaism, as Murphy labelled it (*DF* III, p.44). It is not unlikely that the similarity in appearance of the nasalising relative and the infixed pronoun confused the scribe about the construction of the line, causing him to modify it. Murphy used this one phrase to put the poem well into the thirteenth century based on the labelling the line a pseudoarchaism ; the date of this poem is called into question far more than any of the others by his reliance on one line, more corrupt than incorrect. In a sense Murphy does remain correct, for the poem has an odd mixture of a small number of archaic forms mixed with a more modern (and / or sloppy-appearing) general body. The verbal system has a few old forms for flavour in the Ulster cycle passages, e.g. *do-rochair*, but fails to have other forms of the same verb without using the modern simple verb *tuitim*. Not one *t*-preterite is used correctly, but as a whole they did not survive the twelfth century well at all ; cf. Nuner, op. cit, pp. 259-60, where he notes only a handful in Stokes' *Agallamh*. Yet there are general points, such as *níor* and *nocha(r / n-)* or a possible nasalising relative in q. 103 d that suggest that there is real antiquity to the lay in addition to its level of borrowed heroic phrases, and may not be far removed from the copying and modifying of those texts, as the author has a good sense of the older literary language without trying to use it consistently. Thus one does not find e.g. old forms of *do-srenga*, which might be more confusing to an audience than the few common old verbs of coming, going, and killing.

Furthermore, there is excellent evidence of corruption and tampering elsewhere ; qq. 39 and 40 are in *rannagheacht*. The language may have become more uneven by copying, but it is likely to have been uneven to begin. There is nothing that would prohibit positing these texts as contemporary or near contemporary, reflecting the interest in the Classics which

characterised the twelfth century. Some of the lay, such as the names, e.g. Lomnochtach, 'Starkers,' and the bizarre twisting of the Classics, appears more playful than ignorant, poking fun at 'high' literature. This is the most natural interpretation of episodes such as Cú Chulainn's exhortations to useless Ulster warriors – a parody of *Fled Bricrend* – or that the suggestion that it is easier just to hand over Ireland to an invader than to fight him. Elements of parody, even friendly ones, suggest great familiarity, and thus a closeness in time, with the period when the greatest literary activity in those cycles was (vid. part I, ch. IX). The poem is certainly unlikely to be earlier than the *Togail Troí* and such texts to which it bears loose relation. One may revise the date as far back as circa 1200.

VIII : *Laoidh Colga Chaoilte*

Incipit 'Iss é súd colg in láoich láin'

An edition based on the sole MS, A, according to the principles in the General Introduction.

1. (65 v.) ISS é súd colg in láoich láin. chaoilte meic roglain ronáin
[Oisín:] Iss é súd colg in láoich láin Caoilte meic ro-ghlain Rónáin ;
[Oisín:] Yon is the blade of the perfect warrior, Caoilte so splendid, son of Rónán ;

ar in tulaigh os druim lir. is í alamh féin rus folaigh
ar in tulaigh os Druim Lir — is í a lámh féin ros folaigh.
on the mound over Druim Lir — 'tis his own hand that concealed it.

2. (66 r.) Adearsa riot aláoch luinn. a diarmaid móir mhic cearbhoill
Adéar-sa riot, a láoich luin, a Dhiarmaid móir mhic Cearbhoill,
I shall tell thee, O mighty warrior, O great Diarmaid son of Cearbhall,

noch agcúala cloidheamh crúaidh. ba fearr aitheas is ardbúaidh
nocha gcúala cloidheamh crúaidh ba fearr áitheas is ard-bhúaidh.
that I have not heard of a hard sword that was better of victories and high achievements.

3. Ro marb sé cead ag athlúain. is cead a ttulaigh mongrúaidh
Ro mharbh sé céad ag Áth Lúain is cead i tTulaigh Mhong-ruaidh
It has slain six hundreds at Áth Luain and a hundred in Tulach Mhong-ruaidh

an treas cead affiodh dha bhan. an ceathramhadh cead a ndurmagh
in treas céad i fFiodh dhá Bhán, in ceathramhadh céad i nDurmhagh (.l.)
a third hundred in Fiodh dhá Bhán, a fourth hundred in Durmghagh

4. Maith ro himreadh thu gan feall. agcath fionntragha na mbeimionn
Maith ro himreadh thú gan feall i gcath Fionntrágha na mbéimionn,
Well thou wast employed without ill-turn in the battle of Fionntráigh of blows,

& tú alaim in láoich láin. chaoilte mic roglan ronáin
is tú i láimh in láoich láin, Chaoilte mhic ro-ghlain Rónáin.
and thou in the hand of the perfect warrior, Caoilte so splendid, son of Rónán.

5. An coigeadh cead ag áth lúain. do macroidh eachaigh armrúaidh
In cóigeadh céad ag Áth Lúain do macroidh Eochaidh arm-rúaidh
The fifth hundred at Áth Luain [was] of the troop of Eochaidh of the bloody-arms,

an seiseadh cead meabhoir linn. ag áth na nég ar sionainn
in seiseadh céad — meabhoir linn — ag Áth na nÉag ar Sionainn.
the sixth hundred — the memory is with us — at Áth na nÉag on the Sionainn.

6. Dít ro cuireadh cath cuailgne. iear tteacht ó inbhear mhúaidhe
Dít ro cuireadh cath Cuailgne iar tteacht ó Inbhear Mhúaidhe,
By thee the battle of Cuailgne was undertaken after thy coming from Inbhear Mhuaidhe,

cath do chaoíneadh ar mna amach. da ttorcair conoll ceadach
cath do chaoíneadar mná amach dá ttorchair Conall céadach.
the battle that women lamented thereafter wherein Conall of the hundreds perished.

7. Dít ro marbhadh corc is cían. seal beag oteamraigh anfar
 Dít ro marbhadh Corc is Cían seal beag ó Theamraigh anfar,
 By thee Corc and Cian were slain a short way west from Teamhair,

& dít go ngairbe ngluinn. do thuit loingseach mac domnainn
 ocus dít go ngairbe ngluinn do-thuit Loingseach mac Domnainn.
 and by thee in a bitter deed Loingseach son of Domnann fell.

8. Dít ro marbhadh gan meaboil. an liath alúachair deaghoidh
 Dít ro marbhadh gan meabhail in Liath a Lúachair Deaghoidh ;
 By thee was slain without shame the Liath from Luachair Deaghoidh ;

noch ar é in teacht gan dioghail. duinn nír chóir acommoidhiomh
 nochar é in t-éacht gan díoghail ; dúinn níor chóir a chomh-mhaoidhiomh.
 it was no murder without revenge ; its exultation was unseemly for us.

9. Fear gach éan lá sa mbliadhain. is eadh ros marbh dar bhFíanoibh
 Fear gach éan lá sa mbliadhain is eadh ros marbh d'ar bhFíanoibh,
 A man every single day in the year it was that it slew from our Fiana,

fa conán fa mhac in luin. ní rangattar aleas a athghuin
 fá Chonán, fá mhac in Luin ; ní rángattar a leas a ath-ghuin. (I.)
 under Conán, under Mac an Luin ; they did not come to need a second striking of it.

10. Dít ro marbhadh mac luighdheach.¹ seal beag uasan áth buidhneach
 Dít ro marbhadh mac Luighdheach seal beag uas an Áth Bhuidhneach
 By thee the son of Lughaidh was slain a short way above Áth Bhuidhneach

do lámhach finn na féinne. do badh crúaidh in coiméirge
 do lámhach Finn na Féinne ; do badh crúaidh in coiméirge.
 by the dexterity of Fionn of the Fian ; it was a difficult confrontation.

11. IRis caillighe glinne marc tuc in cloidheamh do sithbhac
 Iris cailleach² Glinne Marc tuc in cloidheamh do Shiothbhac ;
 Iris, the hag of Gleann Marc, gave the sword to Siothbhac ;

mairidh fo achruth gan agné. is dearbh liomsa gurab é
 mairidh fa chruth gan a gné ; is dearbh liom-sa gurab é.
 it endures in substance without its qualities ; I am certain that this is so.

12. Sithbhac fos do rad día mac. in cruaidh claisleatan coimneart
 Sithbhac fós do-rad día mhac in cruaidh-claisleathan cóimhneart
 Sithbhac moreover gave to his son the hard wide-grooved one so strong

déis poil meic coirbre treoraigh. agcathuibh nír bain eolach
 d'éis Poil meic Coirbre treóraigh — i gcathuibh nírbh ain-eolach.
 after Pol son of masterful Coirbre — in battles he was no poor leader.

13. Coirbre garbhsron triath ba teann. dual dó oireachus eireann
 Coirbre garbh-shrón triath ba teann, dual dó oireachus Éireann ;
 Coirbre hard-nose was a mighty lord, hereditary to him was the rule of Erin ;

¹ *lughach* written and deleted with *puncta delenta*.

² Emendatio Murphy (DF III, p. 108).

éulais ó choirbri nár lag. ó tréanmor go adeaghamac
 éulais ó Choirbri nár lag, go³ Thréanmhór go a dheagh-mhac.
 it slipped from Coirbre who was no weakling, to Tréanmhór, to his good son.

14. Do rad tréanmor gan iarraidh. in cloidheamh sin da chliámhoin
 Do-rad Tréanmhór gan iarraidh in cloidheamh sin dá chliámhoin ;
 Tréanmhór gave unasked that sword to his in-laws ;

da rad in cliámhoin nár lag. arna iarraidh dhá deaghamac
 do-rad in cliámhoin, nár lag, ar n-a iarraidh dhá deagh-mhac.
 the in-law, who was not weak, gave [it] after it was requested to his good son.

15. Do rad cumall é dha éis. do crimall ag so afhaisnéis
 Do-rad Cumhall é dha éis do Chriomhall ; ag so a fhaisnéis:
 Cumhall gave it after him to Criomhall ; here is his story:

(66 v.) gé ata sé go cobhsaidh cóir. uch is arsaidh in seanóir
 gé atá sé go cobhsaidh cóir, uch, is arsaidh in sean-óir.
 although he is firm and faithful, alas, the veteran is an old man.

16. An Criomallsin uas gach dionn. rus toirbear é dha deoin dfionn
 In Criomhall sin uas gach dionn, ros toirbhear é dhá dheoin d'Fhionn ;
 That Criomhall above every possession⁴ gave it of his good-will to Fionn ;

do thoirbhir fionn mór in ró. d'fíanaibh Eirionn anáonló
 do thoirbhir Fionn – mór in ró — d'Fíanoibh Éireann i n-áon-ló.
 Fionn gave it – a great excess — to the Fiana of Erin on the same day.

17. Ann sin tiagaid fíana fáil. anáonionadh anáondháil
 Ann sin tiaghaid Fíana Fáil i n-áon-ionadh i n-áon-dháil ;
 Then the Fiana of Fál come to a single place, to a single meeting ;

ba gairid leó teacht uile. go háonach na halmhaine
 ba gairid leó teacht uile go háonach na hAlmhaine.
 it was quick for them all to come to the assembly of Almhain.

18. Ann sin adubhairt fionn fáil. cread fo ttangabair san dáil
 Ann sin adubhairt Fionn Fáil, 'Cread fá ttangabhair san dáil ?
 Then Fionn of Fál said, 'Why have ye come into the assembly ?

do breith uaim deimhin go ngoil. ar ceann mheinigh tangabhair
 Do breith uaim deimhin go ngoil, ar ceann mh'einigh tångabhair.'
 For getting from me, indeed for a boon, in respect of of my generosity ye have come.'

19. Iongnadh leinn a finn aistrigh. séad agaibh is é attaisgidh
 'Iongnadh leinn, a Fhinn aistrigh, séad agaibh is é i ttaisgidh ;
 'It is strange to us, O wandering Fionn, ye have a treasure, and it in safekeeping ;

³ The preposition of the MS is clearly the opposite of the intended meaning, as the next quatrain makes clear.

⁴ There are two potential interpretations of the phrase. OG *dind* according to *DIL* is 'a height, eminence, fortification,' hence Murphy's translation by extension of 'highest of princes,' but there is also rarer *dinn* glossed as 'i. indile' in O'Davoren's Glossary ; the current translation is based upon the latter interpretation.

tusa in coigeadh gan feall. is fearr eineach díath eireann
 tusa in cóigeadh, gan feall, is féarr eineach d'íath Éireann.'
 thou [art] one of the five, without falsehood, who is most generous of the country of Erin.'

20. Ag súd dhaoíbh-si in cloidheam cóir. ar mac qmaill mic treinmóir
 'Ag súd dhaoíbh-si in cloidheamh cóir,' ar mac Cumhaill mhic Tréanmhóir,
 'There for you is the goodly sword,' quoth the son of Cumhall son of Tréanmhór,

ón ló aníú go brath na mbéatt. ar mo seilbh ní bhiaidh acoiméad
 'ón ló inniú go bráth na mbéatt ar mo seilbh ní bhiaidh a choimhéad.
 'from to-day to Doomsday of the sorrows among my property shall not be its retaining.'⁵

21. Caidhe mar do beire dhóibh. ro ráidh oisin agceadóir
 'Caidhe mar do-bheire dhóibh,' ro ráidh Oisín i gcéadóir,
 'What way givest thou it to them,' said Oisín at once,

ané achosnam as a neart. nó in crannchar cubhaidh coimneart
 'an é a chosnamh as a neart nó in crann-chur cubhaidh cóimhneart?'
 'is its winning by their strength, or the equal measure of lots?'

22. Aigillidh ingin í cuinn. in ríoghan ó theamraigh truim
 [Fionn:] 'Aigillidh ingin í Chuinn in ríoghan ó Theamhraigh truim ;
 [Fionn:] 'Ask the daughter of Conn's grandson, the queen from serious Teamhair ;

isí bainbreathiomh gan feall . is fearr⁶ aninis eireann
 is í bain-bhreathiomh, gan feall, is féarr i n-inis Éireann.'
 she is the female judge, without deceit, who is best in the isle of Erin.'

23. Ann sin ro chan aillbhe cháidh. in bhean do bfearr ciall do mnaibh
 Ann sin ro chan Ailbhe cháidh in bhean dob féarr ciall do mnáibh
 Then modest Ailbhe spake, the woman who was best of women in wits

sean breathir so go brath mbil. deanadh cách ceart in cloidhim
 sean-bhriathair so go bráth mbil : "'Déanadh cách ceart in chloidhimh."
 this, a proverb to awful Doomsday : "'Let each make his claim to the sword."

24. Deanaidh-si coimrith agcéin. eidir réidh & aimréidh
 Déanaidh-si coimhrith i gcéin eidir réidh agus aimh-réidh ;
 Make a race of a distance, both open ground and rough ;

ce be díbh bus deach rus reat. rod ría in cloidim claisleathan
 cé bé díbh bus deach ros reath, rod ría in cloidhimh clais-leathan.'
 whoso of you who shall be best who runs it, his shall be the wide-grooved sword.'

25. Ann sin reathaid fíana fáil. an áon chonair asin dáil
 Ann sin reathaid Fíana Fáil i n-áon chonair asin dáil ;
 Then the Fiana of Fál run on one path from the assembly ;

ní faca coimrith ba mó. anáonionad anáonló
 ní faca coimhrith ba mó i n-áon ionad i n-áon-ló
 I have seen no race that was greater in one site in one day.

⁵ Murphy read the word as 'a scabbard,' (DF II, p. 129) the root meaning of the word is 'keeping, protection.'

⁶ MS is *fearr. gan feall*, but marked to shew that they are meant to be inverted.

26. Ann sin do chóid caoílte don fhéin. eidir reidh & aimréidh
Ann sin do-chóid Caoílte den Fhéin (.l.) eidir réidh agus aimh-réidh ;
Then Caoilte went from the Fian both open ground and rough ;

ba hé fionn *budh* foixe dhó. is fíor is ní hiomarghó
ba hé Fionn *budh* foigse dhó ; is fíor, is ní hiomarghó.
it was Fionn who was next to him ; it is truth, it is no lie.

27. Tarraidh caoílte in cloidhiom cáidh. tarraidh fionn in truaill na laim
Tarraidh Caoílte in cloidhimh cáidh ; tarraidh Fionn in truaill 'na láimh ;
Caoilte obtained the flawless sword ; Fionn obtained the scabbard in his hand ;

rug caoílte an cloidheam glan. an truaill d'fhionn mór almhan
rug Caoílte in cloidheamh glan in truaill d'Fhionn mór Almhan. (.l.)
Caoilte took the bright sword, the scabbard to great Fionn of Almhan.

28. Damsa ceart acaoilti chrúaidh. fon gcloidheamsin cona truaill
[Fionn:] 'Damh-sa ceart, a Chaoílte chrúaidh, fón gcloidheamh sin co n-a truaill :
[Fionn:] 'Justice to me, O hard Caoilte, about that sword with its scabbard :

ad cíad fiadhoin sunn go glan. gur anaóinfeacht tarramar
ad-cíad fiadhoin sunn go glan gur i n-aóinfheacht tarramar.'
witnesses here see clearly that at the same time we reached [it].'

29. (67 v.) Do bearsa ceart na caingne. mar as fearr bherus aillbhe
[Caoílte:] 'Do-bhéar-sa ceart na caingne mar as féarr bhéarus Ailbhe ;
[Caoilte:] 'I shall grant the justice of the claim according to the best judgement of Ailbhe ;

mad fearr leat mun*budh* treorach. beraidh fithiol fireolach.
madh féarr leat, mun *budh* treorach, béaraidh Fíthiol fír-eolach.'
if thou prefer it, if it shall not be effective, truly learned Fíthiol will give it.'

30. Do ghéan bar gceart ar aillbhe. sol deachus sibh arogaire
'Do-ghéan bhar gceart,' ar Ailbhe, 'sol deachsaídh i ró-ghairge ;
'I shall make your justice,' quoth Ailbhe, 'before ye go into deep surliness ;

breith dháor oraibhsi ré headh. is maing duine do bearadh
breith dháor oraibh-si ré headh — is maing duine do-bhéaradh.'
a harsh judgement upon you regarding it — woe be whoso might bear judgement.'

31. Dobudh e sin is ceart cóir. ar mac cumaill meic trenmhoir
'Do budh é sin is ceart cóir,' ar mac Cumhaill mheic Tréanmhóir,
That would be a fitting justice,' quoth the son of Cumhall son of Tréanmhór,

acht ge madh áil duinn teacht ris. is duinne ro breathnaighis
'acht gé madh áil dúinn teacht ris is dúin-ne ro breathnaighis.'
'but although we might desire to go with it, it is for us thou hast judged.

32. Na habairsi sin arí. gin gub áil lim sibh gan ní
'Na habair-si sin, a rí ; gin gub' áil liom sibh gan ní,
'Do not say that, O King ; though I do not desire you [to be] without anything,

adearad fithil na mbreath. dlighidh gach láoch adeigheach
adéaradh Fíthiol na mbreath, "Dlighidh gach láoch a dheigh-each."
Fíthiol of the judgements would say, "Every warrior deserves his good horse."

33. Dia ndlighidh cloidheamh atruail. amaic qmaill cloidheamcruaidh
 Dia ndlighidh cloidheamh a thruail a mheic Cumhaill chloidheamh-chruaidh,
 If a sword deserves its scabbard, O son of Cumhaill of hard sword,

dligidh in truail sgél go lí. in beilfhleasg óir go caom lí
 dligidh in truail – sgél go lí — in béil-fhleasg óir go gcaimh-lí.
 the scabbard deserves – a colourful tale — the rim of gold of precious sheen.'

34. Ag súd duitsi achaoílti chrúaidh. in cloidheamsin cona trúail
 Ag súd duit-si, a Chaoílti chrúaidh, in cloidheamh sin co n-a thrúail,
 There to thee, O hard Caoilte, that sword with its scabbard,

& ag súd suaírc in séad. béilfhleasg óir go nimcoiméad
 is ag súd suaírc in séad, béil-fhleasg óir go n-im-coiméad.
 and there is the pleasing treasure, a rim of gold with a guard.

35. Trí fichit uinge dór dhearg. mur do innill iollann dearg
 Trí fichit uinge d'ór dhearg mur do innill Iollann dearg
 Three score ounces of red-gold, as bloody Iollann fashioned it,

isseadh ata suaírc alí. ar in mbeilfhleisg go gcaim lí
 is seadh atá- suaírc a lí, ar in mbéil-fhleisg go gcaimh-lí.
 that it what is- pleasing its appearance, on the rim of beautiful appearance.'

36. .X. ccead each is x. ccead bó. is do bhearadh ní budh mó
 Deich ccéad each is deich ccéad bó — is do-bhéaradh ní budh mó,
 Ten hundred horses and ten hundred kine — and he would have given more yet,

ar son in cloidhim go maoín. targaidh dhó fionn aformaoíl
 ar son in chloidhimh go maoín, targaidh dhó Fionn a Formaoíl.
 for the rich sword, Fionn of Formaol offers him.

37. Mar tairnic duinn ceart na ffear. dirim cairpteach na ndeighfear
 Mar tairnic dúinn ceart na ffear dírim cairpteach na ndeigh-fhear,
 Just as we had settled the men's case, a troop of chariot-riders, of good men,

fithiol is flaithri amach. ad ciam cugainn is cormac
 Fíthiol agus Flaithrí a mhac ad-ciam cugainn — is Cormac.
 Fíthiol and his son Flaithrí we see coming towards us — and also Cormac.

38. Ceiltear uainn ceart na caingne. is seadh adubhairt aillbhe
 'Ceiltear uainn ceart na caingne,' is seadh adubhairt Ailbhe,
 'Let the settlement of the claim be hidden by us,' is what Ailbhe said,

mo breithsi mun budh treorach. bearaidh fithil fír eolach
 'mo bhreith-si mun budh treorach béaraidh Fíthiol fír-eolach.'
 'if my judgement should be ineffective, Fíthiol the wise man will bear one.'

39. Fearaid fáilti fíana fáil. risin gcaom gconchar gcomchair
 Fearaid fáilti Fíana Fáil risin gcaomh gconchar gcomhcháir ;
 The Fiana of Fál bid welcome to the dear hunt-loving equitable one ;

gur suidheadar ar deis finn. an ceathrar uallach airmgrinn
 gur suidheadar ar dheis Finn in ceathrar uallach airm-ghrinn.
 and they sat to the right of Fionn, the noble sharp-armed quartet.

40. Sona go ttigit leasa. adubhairt fionn fáid feasa
 [Fionn:] 'Sona go ttigit leasa,' adubhairt Fionn fáid feasa ;
 [Fionn:] 'Happy he to whom advantages come,' said Fionn, prophet of knowledge ;

mo ceart is caoílte gan on. daoibhsi tig aleasughadh
 'Mo cheart is Caoílte gan on daoibh-si tig a leasughadh.
 'My case and Caoilte's without fault, its resolution comes to you.'

41. Sgél agamsa duit a finn. adubhairt cormac caomgrinn
 [Cormac:] 'Sgél agam-sa duit, a Fhinn ;' adubhairt Cormac caomh-ghrinn,
 [Cormac:] 'I have a tale for thee, O Fionn ;' comely Cormac said,

sibsi & aillbhe uas gach modh. is áil leinn diar siodhughadh
 'sibh-si 's Ailbhe uas gach modh is áil leinn diar síothughadh.
 'you and Ailbhe, beyond every honour, we wish to make our peace.

42. Gabhoir fithil crodh gan locht. do deachadar am lupgort
 Gabhoir Fithil crodh gan locht do deachadar im lubh-ghort ;
 The goats of Fíthiol, a stock without flaw, came into my garden ;

(67 v.) do itheadar mo losa dhe. sdo millseador mo bláth blaithi
 do-fhuadar⁷ mo losa dhe 's do mhillsead mo bhláth bláithi.⁸
 they ate my plants from it, and they ruined my tender flowers.'

43.⁹ Innisidh Fionn na sgéla. sní roibh¹⁰ caoílta dia séna
 Innisidh Fionn na sgéla 's ní roibh Caoílta díá séana ;
 Fionn tells the tales, and Caoilte did not deny them ;

an breathsin rug Ailbhe doibh. rus mol an ceathrar comcoir
 in breath-sin rug Ailbhe dóibh ros mol in ceathrar comhchóir.
 that settlement which Ailbhe bore them, the equitable quartet lauded it.

44. Noch aneadarsa nach íad. ro mhill lubhgort átha líag
 [Fíthiol:] 'Nochan fheadar-sa nach iad ro mhill lubh-ghort Átha Líag ;
 [Fíthiol:] 'I wit that it may have been not they who ruined the garden of Áth Liag ;

teagaid mo gabhair am dháil. gan fostadh gan iomabhail
 teaghaid mo gobhair am dháil gan fostadh gan iom-shabháil.
 my goats come to meet me, without herding, without wandering.

45. Búachail ndíai gh na ngopar. gan eagla gan iomomhan
 Búachail i ndíai gh na ngabhar gan eagla gan iom-omhan,
 A boy [is] in the track of the goats without fear, without terror,

⁷ The line is hypermetric unless one reads *d'* for *do*, a modernism found in none of these lays. The old irregular repairs the metre.

⁸ The line is hypermetric in the MS. Although it can be tweaked to conform, one may suspect deeper corruption, especially when the most blatant modernism in the lay is in the following quatrain, which itself appears out of place. Murphy objects that the line is ungrammatical (*DF* III, p. 109) and then spoils the rhyme with his emendation to the *o*-stem form. There is no problem. *Blaithi* can be read as the genitive of the abstract noun used adjectivally. Alternatively, it is possible to read the words as a compound, reading the second element as the *u*-stem accusative plural which is not rare in MG.

⁹ As Murphy has observed (*DF* II, p. 135 and *DF* III, p. 109), q. 43 obviously belongs between qq. 40 and 41, hence the quatrains ought to be reórded.

¹⁰ *Fionn* has been written and then deleted with puncta.

is búachail oile gan locht. agatsa thall ad lubhgort
 is búachail oile gan locht agat-sa thall id lubh-ghort.'
 and another boy without fault thou hast in thy garden.'

46. Do ghean bar gceart ar aillbhe. noch abhíu díá comairle
 'Do-ghéan bhar gceart,' ar Ailbhe, 'nocha bhiu díá chomhairle':
 'I shall make your settlement,' quoth Ailbhe, 'I shall not seek counsel concerning it':

iocadh in lubhgartoir ribh. ar millseat gabhair fithil
 iocadh in lubh-ghartóir ribh ar mhillseat gabhair Fíthil.
 'let the gardener pay you for what Fíthiol's goats ruined.'

47. Ag sin breath do bhearmaois féin. ro raidh cormac go gcoimcheill
 'Ag sin breath do-bhéarmaois féin,' ro ráidh Cormac go gcoimh-chéill.
 'That is the settlement that we ourself would have given,' said reasonable Cormac.

is í do bearmaois uile. ar mac cumaill¹¹ almhaine
 'Is í do-bhéarmaois uile,' ar mac Cumhaill Almhaine.
 'It is what we all would have given,' quoth Mac Cumhaill of Almhain.

48. Fleadh agamsa duit a finn. adubhairt cormac caoimhgrinn
 'Fleadh agam-sa duit, a Fhinn,' adubhairt Cormac caoimh-ghrinn
 'I have a feast for thee, O Fionn,' said comely Cormac.

aire tanac ar do cionn. mar onóir d'fíanoibh eireann
 'aire tánac ar do chionn mar onóir d'Fíanoibh Éireann.
 'for that I am come to seek thee, as an honour to the Fiana of Erin.

49. .X. ccead do taoiseachaibh fían. lodmar go teamraigh na ngiall
 Deich ccéad do taoiseachaibh Fían lodmar go Teamraigh na ngiall
 We ten hundred of the leaders of Fiana went to Teamhair of the hostages

gan caolbháidh gan caingean locht. aillbhe caomnár sa banntracht
 gan caol-bháidh gan caingean locht Ailbhe caomh-nár 's a banntracht.
 without meagre affability, without dispute of faults, nobly-modest Ailbhe and her retinue.

50. Coig tratha duinn atteamraigh attigh in ríogh mhóirmeanmnaigh
 Cóig trátha dúinn i tTeamraigh i ttigh in ríogh mhóir-meanmnaigh,
 We had five days in Teamhair in the greatly-magnanimous king's house,

ag caitheam bídh is leana. ba haoibhinn ar nairrdheana
 ag caitheamh bídh is leanna ba haoibhinn ar n-airrdheana.
 consuming food and ales; pleasant were our characteristics.

51. Suairc in tuarustal dar liom. dus rad cormac da dheóin dfionn
 Suairc in tuarastal dar liom dos-rad Cormac dá dheóin d'Fhionn:
 Agreeable the reward meseems that Cormac gave of his good-will to Fionn:

tri fichit uinge dór dearg. & caoga cú croibh-dhearg
 trí fichit uinge d'ór dearg agus caoga cú croibh-dhearg.
 three score ounces of red gold and fifty red-pawed hounds.

52. Cáoga ceangaltach na gorn. cáoga fithchioll go ndath ngorm
 Cáoga ceangaltach na gcorn, cáoga fithchioll go ndath ngorm,
 Fifty holders of horns, fifty chess-sets of blue colour,

¹¹ Written after *almhaine*, but marked for transposing.

& cáoga each náonaigh. do mac cumaill armfháobhraigh
 ocus cáoga each n-áonaigh do mac Cumhaill arm-fháobhraigh
 and fifty horses of the fair to Mac Cumhaill the keen-arms.

53. Maith ríge cormaic is finn. mairg fuil na ndíaigh aneirinn
 Maith ríge Cormaic is Finn mairg fuil na ndíaigh i nÉirinn ;
 Good the kingship of Cormac and of Fionn, sorrow to whoso is after them in Erin ;

ba hé bleagan gach bó abhus. lán asreabhainn ré atomhus
 ba hé bleagan gach bó abhus lán a sreabhainn ré a tomhus.
 it was the milking of every cow we had, the fill of her udders to its limit.

54. Mairg táir anaimseir díá néis. re ahinnisin re ahaisnéis
 Mairg táir in aimseir díá n-éis ré a hinnisin ré a haisnéis ;
 Sorrow [to whoso] comes to the age after theirs for its telling, for its account ;

budh sladaighe fir domhain. bradaige mná agcuileadhóibh
budh sladaidhe fir domhain : bradaige mná i gcuileadhóibh.
 the men of the world shall be robbers : thieving women shall be rogues.¹²

55. Reacfaightear iasg mara móir. ris na gallaibh a gceadóir
 Reacfaightear iasg mara móir ris na Gallaibh i gceadóir
 The fish of the great sea shall be sold to the Gall at once

ar ttoigheacht do cum tíre. *budh* comartha droch righe
 ar ttoigheacht dochum tíre ; *budh* cómhartha droch-ríge.
 upon coming onto the land ; it shall be a token of misrule.

56. An díaigh na naom go naille. cleirigh dhíana diogháire
 In díaigh na naomh go n-áille cléirigh dhíana díogháire
 In the wake of glorious saints, severe, vehement clerics

ag foláir chrábhaidh go beacht. is íad féin noch a ndingneat
 ag foláir chrábhaidh go beacht is íad féin noch a ndingneat.
 imposing exacting devotion, and they will not impose it on themselves.

57. Gidh olc na cleirigh gan bhrígh. measa go mor na hairdrigh
 Gidh olc na cleirigh gan bhrígh measa go mór na háird-rígh ;
 Though bad be the clerics without virtue, much worse [shall be] the high kings ;

gidh olc na rígha rabhaigh. measa na maoir treintaphaigh
 gidh olc na rígha rabhaigh measa na maoir tréin-tabhaigh.
 though bad be the bullying kings, worse the greatly-demanding bailiffs.

58. Díá labhraid cluig agceallaibh. gidh ard leighionn gach seanoidh
 Díá labhraid cluig i gceallaibh, gidh árd leighionn gach seanoidh,
 When bells ring in churches, though high is the learning of every synod

noch amó do cluin críost caidh. no sanais isin camaír
 noch a mó do-cluin Críost cáidh ná sanais isin camhaoir.
 not more does holy Christ hear [it] than a greeting in the morn.

¹² Murphy translated 'in storerooms' (DF II, p.141). He appears to be reading *cuile* for *cúil*; and his translation robs the couplet of the parallel structuring.

59. Noch anfeadar créad do dhén. fil mo rosc ag sileadh déar
 Nochan fheadar créad do-dhén, fil mo rosc ag sileadh déar ;
 I wit not what I shall do, my eye is shedding tears ;

cloidhiomh caoilti ba caomh gné. is meabhair leamsa gurab é.
 cloidhiomh Caoilti, ba caomh gné, is meabhair leam-sa gurab é.
 the sword of Caoilte, dear was his appearance, I have the memory that this is it.

===ISE===

Language

The following forms are worthy of comment

- 1d *ros folaigh*, infix pronoun in apposition with fronted independent pronoun
- 2a, *adéar-sa*, older future conjunct zero-ending preserved in an irregular verb
- 2c *nocha*, disyllabic negative
- 3a *ro mharbh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 4a *ro himreadh thu*, perfective with *ro-*, but using the independent pronoun as subject of the impersonal verb
- 4b the line is faulty unless one allows for an extrametrical *i* in *mbéimionn* by bardic rules or reads *Fionntrágha* as a disyllable (a modernism)
- 4c *is tú*, uninflected copula
- 6a *ro cuireadh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 6d *torchair*, well preserved older form from *do-tuit*
- 7a *ro marbhadh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 7d *do-thuit*, modern regular form
- 8a *ro marbhadh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 8c *nochar*, disyllabic copula
- 8d *níor*, monosyllabic copula
- 9b *ros marbh*, infix pronoun in apposition to fronted object in the previous line
- 11b *tuc*, prototonic form of *ro-ucc* (functional perfect of *do-beir*) in independent use
- 12a *do-rad*, older preterite of *do-beir*
- 13c *éulais*, A prototonic of *as-luí*, (*-élaid*). The verb is common in legal texts for passing through inheritance.
- 13c *nár*, relative copula
- 14a *do-rad*, older perfect of *do-beir*
- 14c *do-rad*, older perfect of *do-beir*
- 15a *do-rad Cumhall é*, older perfect of *do-beir*, but the object is an independent pronoun
- 15c *gé atá sé*, *gé* is a more modern form from *gidh* with loss of final *-dh*. If it is restored, then the elision is prevented and the subject pronoun, another modernism, may be deleted without damage to the metre.
- 16b *ros toirbhear é*, independent subject pronoun or doubling of the object pronoun. The verbal form itself is a modernism itself
- 16c *do thoirbhir*, another modernism, as the preverb *do-* is doubled
- 18b *ttángabhair*, later deponent derived verbal ending
- 21a *do-bheire*, older *-e* ending in the second person singular
- 21b *ro ráidh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 22a *aigillidh*, from earlier *ad-gládathar*. The verb does not survive in the modern period. The usage may be late, as the general meaning is 'speak.'
- 23a *ro chan*, perfective with *ro-*
- 24c *bus deach ros reath*, future relative copula, older superlative, and old prototonic present. Murphy (*DF* III p. 107) thinks the infix pronoun merely a degenerate marker of the

relative, although there is no reason why it cannot have full meaning and refer to the *cóimhrith* in line a.

- 24d *rod ría in cloidhimh*, the infixed pronoun construction is good, but there are several possibilities for the derivation of the verb. These are, a slip for *-fía*, a substandard form of the same with redundant doubling of *ro-* (the infixed pronoun with compounds of the substantive verb is a construction common in the *DF* lays ; or as a future of *ro-saig*, noted in *DIL* with the example *co rría* LU 9978, read in the sense of *DIL* 1(b) 'it falls to X,' although this sense is always used with the preposition *do* in the exempla given. The object is in the accusative, although not fixed by metrical device.
- 26a *do-chóid*, older long-*o* form
- 28c *ad-cíad*, older preverb preserved
- 28d *tarramar*, later verbal ending
- 29a *do-bhéar-sa*, without later *-ad*
- 30b *sol deachsaidh*, MS *sol deachus sibh*, s-preterite by analogy to regular verbal conjugation and analytic subject ; both bear the marks of extreme modernism, and the line is hypersyllabic. One must suspect scribal interference. Restore the older *deachsaidh* to correct the metrical fault. (*Deachthaoi* is also possible, but less likely for reason of the *s* in the verb.)
- 30c *áta sé*, analytic verb
- 31d *ro breathnaighis*, perfective preterite
- 33a *dia ndlighidh*, a present following *dia* where one would expect the subjunctive. Murphy emends to the later form *dlighe* (*DF* III p. 108). The indicative may only be a scribal error, for line c begins with the same form and the scribe could have miscopied.
- 35b *do innill*, from *innillid*, a later form of *inillid*, 'to safeguard'
- 37a *tairnic*, likely an modernism of an invented prototonic of the perfect *do-ránaic* from *do-air-icc* ; (the tense is only attested in the deuterotonic in OG). There could also be a heavily modernised form of *do-srenga* behind the form which has taken a parallel development to the more common *-icc* compounds.
- 37d *ad-cíam*, older non-deponent ending
- 39b *gcaomh gconchar gcómhchair*, nasalisation of both adjectives
- 39c *suidheadar*, later deponent derived ending
- 40a *ttigit*, byform of *teagaid*
- 40a *leasa*, MG legal term
- 40d *leasughadh*, MG legal term
- 42b *do deachadar*, prototonic perfect form with reduplicated *do-* prefixed
- 42c *do itheadar*, a modernism : OG perfect 3pl. *do-fuatar*, *-dúatar*, early modern *duadar*. The line is hypermetric unless one elides *do*, which is a modernism. It is better to restore the older form.
- 42d *do mhillsead*, later deponent derived ending *-adar* in MS, which is hypermetrical
- 43b *ní roibh*, late form. There are no other places where the monosyllable *raibh* is found in the texts of this study.
- 43d *ros mol*, infixed pronoun in apposition to the object, which is given in the preceding line
- 44a *nochan fheadar-sa nach iad*, earlier disyllabic negative and irregular deponent verb, followed by the monosyllabic negative uninflected copula
- 44b *ro mhill*, perfective with *ro-*
- 46a *do-ghén*, older zero future ending of the 1st person singular
- 46b *nocha bhíu*, disyllabic negative and old *-u* termination of the verb preserved in the irregular paradigm of the substantive consuetudinal.
- 46d *ar millsead*, plural s-preterite perfective with older ending
- 47b *ro raidh*, perfective with *ro-*
- 49b *lodmar*, good t-preterite of *téit*
- 49c *caingin*, MG legal term
- 51b *dos-rad*, older preterite of *do-beir* with infixed pronoun used as a relative marker
- 52a *ceangaltach*, vid. Murphy's note *DF* III, p. 236. The word is *hapax legomenon*, and its

- connotations are unknown, but the general sense is clear enough
- 53c *bleagan*, the form is transitional, with Classical use (cf. *IGT* declension § 17), OG *mlegon*, Early Modern *bleaghan*, more recently *bleaghadh*
- 54a *táir*, modern form from *do-air-icc* with zero present ending (better *tair* ?)
- 55a *reacfaightear*, a modernism, as *renaid* had a reduplicating future. Murphy gives a list of related MG forms of this *f*-future from the gerund stem in his note (*DF* III, p. 109)
- 55c *dochum*, a word avoided in Classical verse, but preserved in its early form
- 56d *nocha ndingneat*, disyllabic negative with an early future form of *dingid*
- 58c *nocha*, disyllabic negative copula
- 58c *do-chluin*, older zero ending, but the understood object could have been expressed with an infixed pronoun
- 59a *nochan fheadar*, earlier disyllabic negative and irregular deponent verb
- 59b *fil... ag sileadh*, modern verbal noun progressive construction

Prof. Murphy dated the poem to the middle of the twelfth century ; the summary of his reasons is given in *DF* III, pp. 107-8. It can stand with very little revision at all in this case. Only a few further points need be made. There is nothing further to add to his summary of the copula or analytic verbs except to note that the exempla of the latter in qq. 15c and 30b are in hypersyllabic lines easily fixed by the substitution of the synthetic form. There is also a pronoun used with the impersonal verb at q. 4b. His statement on the state of the infixed pronoun also stands. Additional grammatical points which he did not mention include the following. There may be one example of the *tá... ina* construction at 54d, which Murphy read entirely differently (vid. footnote 11 above). *Dochum* appears at 55c in its old disyllabic form ; after 1200 it tends to be reduced, (ch. II [b], § 8 above in part I). Apart from the modernism of *roibh*, q. 43b, and the progressive in 59b, the verbal system notably older. There are no forms more modern than some of the deponent derived endings such as *-adar*, (qq. 39b, 42 b,c. More verbal forms tend to preserve old stems. The t-preterite is used correctly in *lodmar*, q. 49b (the other lays fail to get the forms other than *luidh* correct). There is MG doubling of redundant preverbs (e.g. *do thoirbhir*, q. 16c ; *do deachadar*, q. 42b). The disyllabic forms of the negative *nochar*, *nochan* are always used. There are many survivals of the older deuterotonics or transitional forms. The vocabulary, as Murphy noted with a most complete list, is full of precise legal terminology of the MG period. Such vocabulary in such quantity gives the general impression that the native legal system was flourishing in full when the poem was written.

It is also to be remarked that this poem has an unusually high number of metrically faulty lines. Q. 43 is obviously in the wrong place. Although qq. 53 to the end are in keeping with the closing of SF and CO in the presentation of the themes of decay and lament before returning to the object, the strong number of modernisms in those quatrains do make them potentially a later addition or more likely at least heavily modified, even if they are not the simple interpolation of another fragment that Murphy theorised. There are also some signs of age in them, suggesting that at a bare minimum that they well predate Ó Dochartaigh's copying of the poem into DF. Overall, this is a poem which appears to have received far more rewriting and modernisation (in the language of Murphy always 'corruption') than the other texts grouped together earlier in the MS. The the dating of this poem must thus be more tentative than that of the better preserved texts. In conclusion, the evidence, especially the vocabulary, verbal system, and the multiple ('degenerate' to Murphy) uses of infixed pronouns give cause to confirm cautiously the date assigned it by Murphy.

IX : Index Nominum

All names are alphabetised in the form chosen for the normalised edition and in the nominative case. All attested case-forms, as they appear in the MSS follow. Vocatives are listed without the particle *a*, which is universally present. The accusative case is in the process of disappearing ; it has been decided to list all forms used grammatically as accusatives under accusatives, even if the form is actually that of the nominative. Translations of Classical names in Irish spelling are given. Patronymics and nicknames follow ; individuals whose names are only found as patronyms are only listed thus and do not receive a separate entry. Major events concerning the character in the relic lays are indexed. Any further notes on that individual follow, including other references to Fenian warriors, especially in the *Agallamha*. All persons in the discussion for whom there are independent entries are printed in boldface.

The additional abbreviations of S for Whitley Stokes' edition of the *Agallamh* ('*Acallamh na Senórach*,' *Irische Texte* IV : 1 [Leipzig : S. Herzl, 1900]) and also *LnaF* for An Seabhac, *Laoithe na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath : Clóluacht an Talbóidigh, 1941) are used in this index and the former of these is also in the *index locorum*.

Ábhartach : Gen. Ábhartaigh CB 6b
Named as the father of **Lúchra**.

A character of this name appears also in AS III, in the lay 'Oisín & an Chorr', p. 87, l. 2. His patronymic is given there as mac Iollathaigh. This character is, however, in the rôle of the lover that **Ilbreac** plays in CB. The rôle played here by Ábhartach is that of Eachdhonn in 24 P 5. (Vid. note B to the edition of CB).

The name also appears as the father of Smirgat, S l. 3021 ; there may be some connexion, but it remains uncertain.

Acall : Nom. Acoll CO 76b ; Acc. Acall CO 82b
An invader who receives the hostages of all Ireland, CO 76. Apparently defeated by **Fearghus**, but the text is imperfect, and the end of the episode is missing.

Achaba : Dat. Achapa CO 28d, 'Hecuba'
Queen of Troy

Adhnuall : Gen. Adhnúail, CO 73d
Used in the name of the Clann Adhnúail, whom the Ulaidh fight in Alba.

Aichil : Gen. Aichil CO 41b, 'Achilles'
Kills **Eachtair** (Hector), CO 41

Aicil : Nom. Aicil SF 54a
Slain in battle named after him
Styled as King of Denmark

Ailgeanán : Acc. Ailgeanán SCA 20d, Ailgenán SCP 17d
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue
Also mentioned in the prose text of SC in AS III, p. 15

Ailbhe : Nom. Aillbhe CC 23a, 29b, 30a, 38b, 41c, 43c, 46a, 49d ; Dat. Aillbhe SCA 105d, SCP 109d

Avenymic : í Cuinn, granddaughter of Conn' CC 22a
As 'queen of Teamhair,' CC 22b
As a judge CC 22 & ff.

One of the Fenian women **Fionn** gives a ring, SCA 105d, SCP 109d
Daughter of King **Cormac** and wife of **Fionn** in these lays. There are a number of women by this name in DF, AS, S, and other Fenian texts. It is not always possible to differentiate among them. She appears in the same context of **Fionn**, **Cormac**, **Fíthiol**, and **Flaithrí** in

'Caithréimh Fhinn mhic Cumhaill,' *LnaF*, p. 270, q. 30.

Aimhirgin : Gen. Aimhirghin CO 80b, 85b.

The ancient mythical leader in *Lebor Gabala* who judges between the sons of Míl and the Tuatha Dé Danann and with whom the a portion of the *Seanchas Mór* is associated

Alaxandair : Nom. Alaxandair CO 33a, 34a. 'Alexander' (i.e. Paris)

Cause of the destruction of Troy, CO 33

Abducts **Ealéna** (Helen), CO 34

Described as a son of **Prímh**

Proper name of Paris, vid. part I ch. IX under Sources : Classical for loci where that information was available

Ánluan : Nom. Ánluan SCA 15b, Anluan SCP 14b

A British Fenian king, son of High King **Iobhair**

Also in the prose SC in AS III p. 15.

Aobh : Dat. Aobh SCP 109c

One of the seven Fenian women given a ring by **Fionn** (missing from the A list)

Aobhdhonn : Dat. Aobhdhonn SCP 109c

One of the seven Fenian women given a ring by **Fionn** (missing from the A list)

Aodh : Nom. Aodh SCP 29a, 53b, Áodh SCA 25a, 52a ; Dat. Aodh SCP 31a, Áodh SCA 27a

Patronymic : m. Finn, SCA 25a, 27a, 52a, SCP 29a, 53b

Always given the epithet *beag*

His hound is identified as *Fuilteach*, 'Bloody,' SCA 27, SCP 31

A frequently seen member of the *fian* with too many appearances to list in full. He is found in 8 lays of *DF*, including being one of the warriors associated with the banners in lay *XVLI*. In the *Agallamh*, (additionally to SCP and its prose introduction) in *AS I*, pp. 161, 258, 264 ; *II*, pp. 5, 110, 136 ; and four places in *S*. The item in *AS I*, p. 110 is the genealogy of the Clann Tréanmhóir among the seven sons of **Fionn** = *DF I*, p. 25. *AS II*, p. 136, in prose, names his mother as Áine, and notes 'Fa marbh í do bhreith Aedha.'

Aoichear : Acc. Aichear SCA 20d

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue, equivalent to **Áoifhear** in *P*

Aoife : Nom. Aiffe CB 4a, Aoiffe CB 6a ; Voc. Áoiffe CB 7b ; Acc. Aíffe CB 5a

Daughter of **Dealbháoth**, lover of **Ilbreac** CB 4

She is changed by her rival **Iúchra** into the crane around whom CB focuses, CB 5

In the 24 *P* 5 lay, this character is called *Miadhach*.

Aoife : Dat. Aoife SCP 109c, Áoiffe SCA 105c

One of the seven Fenian women given a ring by **Fionn**

It is unclear which Aoife she may be, for there are four other women named Aoife in *DF*, *AS*, and *S*

Aoifhear : Acc. Áoifhear SCP 17d

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue (not in *A*).

Also noted in the prose SC, *AS III*, p. 16.

Aonghus (Gaoi Fuileach) : Nom. Áongus Gaoí Fuileach CO 98c ; Dat. Áongus CO 102b

Acc. Áongus CO 100b, 'Aongus Bloody-Harpoon'

Patronymic m. **Breasail**, (& **Bé Thuinne**)

Receives the CO from **Fionn**'s courier CO 100

Asal (?) : Gen. Asail CB 12d

In phrase *cnamha muc n-Asail*, 'bones of the pigs of Asal,' a treasure in the CB. It is uncertain whether this is a person or a place, or a corrupted description.

Asgán : Nom. Asgán 45d ; Dat. Asgán CO 47b. 'Ascanius'

Receives the wealth of **Eínías** (Æneas), CO 47

Ascanius (Iulus), son of Æneas in Virgil

Balor : Nom. Balor SF 10a

Beheaded by **Lugh** SF 10-12

The one-eyed champion of the Tuatha Dé Danann defeated by **Lugh** in *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*

Bádhbh : Nom. Bádhbh CO 98c

'Vulture'- the war-goddess, a Fury

Bé Bhéasair : Nom. Bé Bheassair CO 53c ; Dat. Bé Bhéssair CO 52b ; Acc. Bé Bhesair CO 53b

Patronymic: ingean Dáire CO 53a

Mother of **Íuil Séasair** (in a corrupt passage)

Marries Níul, CO 53

An invented, ahistorical personage

Bé Chrotha: Nom. Bé Chrotha CO 14d

Daughter of **Gola Gallamhoil**, CO 14

Mother of **Mana Faluis**, CO 15

Bé Milis: Acc. Bé Milis CO 49b

Patronymic: ingean Tola CO 49b, 50a

Taken from Inis Dona ('The Wretched Isle') by **Silbhí** as his wife, CO 49

Bears a son **Níul** to **Silbhí**, CO 50

Gives **Níul** the CO, CO 51

Bé Thuinne : Nom. Bé Thuinne CO 97c ; Gen. Bé Thuinne CO 98a

Daughter of **Eimhear Alpa**, wife of **Breasail**, mother of **Áongus Gaoí Fuileach**

Breasal : Gen. Breasail CO 98a, Breasoil CO 97d

Husband of **Bé Thuinne**, father of **Áongus Gaoí Fuileach**, and King of an unnamed place
Breasal is a common name in AS ; it is possible that this is King Breasal Bhóirne, found in the lay 'Ráith na n-Longnadh,' AS II, p.24, and who is identified in the prose preceding (p.19) as the King of Ulster

Breasal Bán : Acc. Breasal Bán SCA 20a, SCP 17c

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

He is noted in the prose SC, AS III, p. 16. There are other minor characters named Breasal in the *Agallamha*, but none are *bán*.

Bricne : Nom. Bricne CO 65b

Brother of **Muinreamhar**, whom he addresses, CO 65-6, 68-9

An Ulster-cycle warrior found in *Táin Bó Cualnge*, &c.

Bonn or **Bunn (?)** : Gen. Buinne SF 54d

In phrase *cath Buinne boirb-thréin*, likely an invader-tale

Cairbre (1) : Nom. Cairbre SF 26a, 28a

Patronymic: m. Éadáine 28b

Praises the shield in a poem for the king of Sigear, and receives it, SF 26

Gives the **Daghdha** the shield, SF 28

See also **Inghean Cairbre**, whose name is not given.

Cairbre (2) : Gen. Chairbre CO 58d
Daughter kidnapped by **Lomnochtach**

Cairbre (3) : Nom. Cairbre SCP 13d
A Fenian warrior. In the place of **Fáolán** in the list in SCA 14
Also noted in the prose SC, AS III p. 15.

Caladh : Nom. Caladh CO 54b, 55a, 56a, 57a
In compounds referring to the CO: Caladh-Cholc CO 47b, Caladh-Cholg CO 92d, 93b,
Caladh-Colg, CO 72d, 87a
Daughter of **Níul** and **Bé Bhéassair**
Elopes with **Lomnochtach**, and gives the CO to him, CO 55
Gives her name to the sword, CO 56

Caoilte : Nom: Caoilte SCA 8d, SCP 10c, Caoílte CC 26a, SCP 9b, 112c, SF 8a, Caoilti SCA 11a, Caoíliti CC 26a, 27c, 43b, Chaoilte SCP 7d ; Voc: Chaoílte CB 1a, Chaoilte CB 3a, Chaoíliti CC 28a, 34a ; Gen. Caoilte SCA 7b, Caoilti CC 59c, Chaíliti SCA 1a, Chaoilte SCP 3d, Chaoílte CC 4d, 40c, CO 109d, SCA 112d, SCP 1a, 116d, 121d, Chaoilti, SCA 2d, Chaoíliti CC 1b, SCA 3d, 117d ; Dat. Caoíliti, SCA 107a, Chaoilte, SCP 110d, Chaoíliti SCA 106d, 109b

The name Caoílte is often not written fully in P, but rather abbreviated .c. It is written Caoilte at 1a, which is the form used in expansion. Only those places where the name is written in full are cited above. The abbreviated name is found at SCP 1d, 3b, 111a, 113a

The Old Gaelic declension where the nom. and acc. end in -e and the gen. in -i was dead in MG ; the forms are found randomly in A with no regard to case ; the name has become indeclinable from the loss of distinction between final short vowels. P simply chose the form *Caoílte* and does not decline when the name is written in full in this lay or elsewhere in the MS.

Patronymic : m. Cruinn SCP 7d

Avenymic : m. roglain Ronáin CC 1b, 4d ; ua Rónáin SCA 8a ; úa Ronain SCP 7a

Narrator of CB 2, 4-19

Owner of the *colg* shewn **Oisín**, CC 1b

Contests successfully with **Fionn** for the CC, CC 26 & ff.

Given the SC from the fairies by **Fionn**, SCA 106, SCP 110

Caoilte is too large a character to give all of his adventures. (In the index to AS in vol. III, his entry spans pp. 198-9 nearly in full.) He is one of the Fenian survivors who dialogues with St. Patrick in the *Agallamh*, and thus is the persona of the speaker in some lays, including CB. He is also associated with banners in both of the traditions described in ch. V.

Caoín : Acc. Caoín SCA 21c, SCP 18c
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

Caoínche : Nom. Caoínche SCA 25d, SCP 29d, 55a, Caoínche SCA 49b ; Gen. Caoínche SCA 28b, Caoínche SCP 32b

Patronymic : m. Finn SCP 55a

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party

His hound is identified as **Fíamhach**, 'Virulent', SCA 28, SCP 32

Listed in 'An Dord Fiansa, ' AS II p. 5, and in the genealogy of Clann Trénmhóir as one of 'Seacht meic shoineamhla acc Fionn féin.' His mother was Ailbhe Gruaidh-bhrice, and

Faolán (q.v.) his brother (AS III, p. 64). **Caoilte** tells that he was killed on the mountain thereafter known as Sliabh Caoínche by Clann Morna (AS II, p. 162). In that citation, he is given the epithet Corcor-dhearg. In DF, he is also in lays XI and XXIII. He occurs in the prose SC, p. 17. The only other mention of him in AS is again in a list of warriors (AS III, p. 141). There are 6 references to him in S, s.n. Caince Corcarderg m. Find.

Cas : Acc. Cass SCA 21a, SCP 18a

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

There is an equivalent mention in the prose SC, AS III, p. 16. There are a number of other characters bearing the name Cas in AS, but none of them can be identified with this character.

Cathbhadh : Nom. Cathbhoidh CO 77c ; Voc. Chathbhaidh CO 79d, 83b

Gives council regarding the invasion of **Acall**, CO 77 &ff.

The great druid in the Ulster cycle

Cearmad : Gen. Cearmada CB 16d ; Cearmotó SF 29d

As a patronymic: the sons of Cearmad kill **Lugh**, CB 16 (the sons are not named) ;

Eitheór mac Cuinn mic Cearmotó receives the SF, SF 29

Only other mention in *DF* is in lay XII as father of one of the (unnamed) Fenian women.

Appears in a list of supernatural beings, AS II, p. 35. The index to AS calls him Cearmaid do chlannaibh Anann (III, p. 200).

Ceolach : Acc. Ceolach SCA 21d, SCP 18d

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

Noted in prose SC (AS III, p. 16). The name is an adjective meaning 'musical.'

Cian : Nom. Cian CC 7a

Slain by CC

Most likely to be identified as Cian m. Caoilte, noted as son of Dubh-Ailme inghean Dubhthaigh and brother of Colla and **Corc**, the latter of which is also slain in this lay. The passage is in the poem 'Teachta Ríogh Éireann', found at AS II, p. 58. The explanation of why they were slain with their father's sword is not given. *DF* lay XII q. 13 tells that there were 10 Cians in the *fiana* ; it is not clear to which Cian(s) the numerous references in *DF* apply.

Ciothruaidh : Acc. Ciothrrúaidh SCA 21a, Ciothruáidh SCP 18a

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

A ubiquitous Fenian. He is also mentioned in the prose SC, AS II p. 16. He appears also in AS in the tale of Ailléan mac Míodhna, where he is named as Ciothruadh mac Fir Chaogad, I, p. 191 ; II, p. 123-4, 132-3, 170 ; III, p. 155 ; and 4 times in S. He plays in *DF* lay II / LXVI (the latter is the *DF* 'Banners' lay)

Cnú Dheireóil : Acc. Cnú Deireóil SCA 17d, Cnú Dheireoil SCP 21, 'Chief of the Wretched'

Sent hunting with **Oisín** by **Fionn**

He also appears, AS III, p. 16, in the prose SC. Cnú Dheireóil is the subject of a tale in AS I, pp. 50-58 and S II.611-91. He is described as the best of the Fenian musicians, by reason of being of the Túatha Dé and thus having fairy music. He receives 2 other mentions in S, and is the subject of 2 other small digressions in AS II, p. 51 and pp. 112-3.

Cobhthach : Acc. Cobhtach SCA 21a, Cobhthach SCP 18a

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue. Also in the prose SC, AS III p. 16.

There are a number of other characters bearing this name in the *Agallamha*, but no identification with them can be made.

Coirbre : Nom. Coirbre CC 13a ; Gen. Coirbre CC 12c ; Dat. Choirbri CC 13c

Gives the CC to Tréanmhór, CC 13c

Potentially identifiable with any one of a number of characters Cairbre, but there is nothing to identify which one.

Conaire : Nom. Conaire CB 19a ; Gen. Conaire CB 18d

Awakes with the CB around his neck at Tara, CB 19

Final possessor of the CB when the lay breaks off at q. 19.
Identified as King of Ireland, reg. A.D. 158-65, in *AFM*.

Conall : Nom. Conall CO 80a, 85a ; Voc. Conuill CO 86a
Patronymic : m. Aimhirghin CO 80b, 85b, 86b
Asks whether he is the champion to stop Acall, CO 80 & ff.
In the prose which immediately precedes the story in *AS* III, p. 202), he is called Conall Céarnach. This pedigree is not the one of the more famous Ulster champion. Further mentions of this C.C. are found in *AS* I, p. 206 and *Met. Dind.* iv, 356.

Conán : Acc. Conán CC 9c
Probably the leader of a rival *fíán*. This Conán cannot be identified with any of the 7 Conáns in *AS* or 4 in *S*. Mac an Luin, the name given the CC when he has it, is traditionally the name of Fionn's sword. Vid. *DF* I, lay XXIV, qq. 38 & 78 ; *DF* II, lay XXXVI, q. 42, & al.

Corc : Nom. Corc CC 7a
Slain by CC
He may be associated, due to placement in the same line as **Cian**, with a son of **Caoilte** by Dubh-Ailme, *AS* II, p. 5.

Cormac : Nom. Cormac CC 37d, 41b, 47b, 48b, 51b, SF 47b ; Gen. Cormac CC 52a
Asks for the judgement of Fionn CC 41
Honours the *fíán* with a feast, CC 48
Slain at the battle of Bolgraigh, SF 47
High King of Ireland at the time of the Fenian adventures. He features in 13 *DF* lays and is frequently a subject of reminiscence in the *Agallamha*.

Corr : Nom. Corr SCA 14a, SCP 13a
A Fenian warrior
In *DF*, found also in lays X, XII, XXIII ; also noted in the 'Oidheadha na Féine' to have been slain at Ráth Dá Ruireach (*AS* I, p. 153)

Cosluath : Nom. Cosluath SCA 14a, Cossluath SCP 13a
A Fenian warrior

Craoibhfhinn : Nom. Craoibhfhinn SCA 71c 'White-Branch'
Patronymic : inghean Manannáin SCA 71
Wife of **Eanan** and Queen of the *sídh*, called **Croifhionn** in *P*

Crinne : Acc. Crinne SCA 21c
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue, equivalent to **Criona** in *P*

Criomhall : Nom. Criomall CC 16a, Criomhall SF 41b ; Dat. Crimall CC 15b, Criomall SF 41b
Receives the CC, CC 15
Gives it to Fionn, CC 16
Obtains the SF at Cath Cnucha SF 41
A well-known Fenian : brief mentions in 7 other *DF* lays and listed in *AS* (mostly genealogies) II, pp. 59, 77, 108-9 ; III, pp. 2, 5, and the list of Fenian leaders at *S* I. 2490 & ff. A son of **Tréanmhór**, hence **Fionn**'s uncle.

Criona : Acc. Criona SCP 18c
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue, equivalent to **Crinne** in *A*
Also noted in the prose *SC*, *AS* III, p. 16

Criost : Nom. Criost CC 58c, 'Christ'

Also invoked as m. Muire, SF 63b ; Rí Neimhe 'King of Heaven' SF 63a

Crithir : Nom. Crithir CO 2b
 Patronymic : mac Duibhgreann
 Killed by CO

Croifhionn : Nom. Croifhionn SCP 74c
 Patronymic : inghean Mhanannáin SCP 74d
 Wife of **Eanan** and Queen of the *sídh*, called **Craoibhfionn** in A
 Also noted in prose SC, AS III, p. 19, where the name is given as Croithfhionn

Cronán : Acc. Cronán SCA 21c, Cronnan SCP 18c
 A musician of **Forann**'s retinue
 Also noted in prose SC, AS III, p. 16

Cú Chulainn : Nom. Cu Culainn 71a, 72b, Cú Chulainn CO 60b ; Dat. Coin Qlainn CO 68b ; Acc. Con Qluinn CO 70d
 By other epithet: Chon Chúailnge, CO 61c
 Lover of **Cairbre**'s (2) daughter abducted by **Lomnochtach** CO 60
 Distributes the treasures from **Muinreamhar** to the host of Ulster, CO going to Feargus, CO 71
 The great hero of the Ulster cycle

Cú (na cCleas) : Nom. Cú na gCleas CO 63c, 80c, 'Hound of tricks'
 An Ulster watchman who fails to stop **Lomnochtach**, CO 63
 Asks whether he is the chosen champion against **Acall**, CO 80
 An Ulster-cycle warrior

Cú Rí : Nom. Cú Rí CO 81a 'Hound of Kings'
 An Ulster-cycle warrior

Cuailgne : Gen. Cuailgne CC 6a
 In phrase *cath Cuailgne*, 'Cuailgne's battle,' i.e. *Táin Bó Cualnge*

Cuan (Cruimghlinne) : Nom. Cúaan SCP 55d (see footnote), Cúan SCA 25a, SCP 29b ;
 Gen. Cúain SCA 18c ; Dat. Cúan SCA 27d, SCP 31d
 Epithet Cruimghlinne, 'of Winding/Crooked Glen,' SCA 27, SCP 29, Cromghlinne SCP 31d, Croimghlinne SCP 55d
 A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party
 Clann Cúain are sent hunting with **Oisín** by **Fionn**, SCA 18
 Cúan in **Fionn**'s own hunting party, SCA 25, SCP 29
 His hound is identified as Gáoth 'Wind'
 There are a number of vague references to Cuan in *DF*, but it is not clear whether it is only one person whom they denote. Also noted in prose SC, AS III, p. 17

Cumhall : Nom. Cumall CC 15a, Cumhall SF 39a, 40a ; Voc. Finn CC 19a ; Dat. Cumhall CB 1d
 Patronymic : m. Trenmhóir CB 1d
 Father of Fionn ; see also **Fionn mac Cumhaill** for use as a patronymic.
 As owner of the CB, CB 1
 Receives CC, CC 14, gives it to **Criomhall**, CC 15
 Takes SF when he abducts **Muirn**, SF 40
 Killed at Cnucha, SF 40
Ríghfhéinidh and father of Fionn slain by **Goll** mac Morna in the battle of Cnucha

(In) **Daghdha** : Nom. Dághdha SF 29a ; Dat. Dághdha SF 28d
 Recipient of SF, SF 28

Gives the shield to **Eitheór** SF 29

An otherworldly, mythological figure, father of Aonghus. He features in mythological cycle tales, especially *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, and is a minor character in the Fenian cycle. There are 3 other references to him in *DF*, but numerous more in the *Agallamha*.

Daighre : Nom. Daighre SCP 53d ; Acc. Daighre SCA 17d, SCP 21d

Sent hunting with **Oisín** by **Fionn**, SCA 17, SCP 21

Named again as in **Fionn**'s own party, SCP 53

In prose SC, AS III, p. 16. There are several Fenian warriors bearing this name mentioned in *DF*, AS, and S. The name is associated with Clann Morna in most of these references. NiS connected this Daighre with Daighre mac Garaidh in her indices in AS III, but there are other possibilities.

Dáire (1) : Nom. Daire SCA 25d, SCP 29d, 52c , Dáire SCA 52c ; Dat. Daire SCP 32c, Dáire, SCA 28c

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party

His hound is identified as Fearglonn 'Man-killer,' SCA 28, SCP 32

DF lay XII q. 15 identifies 10 *féinidhe* of this name, and indeed the name is very common throughout the Fenian cycle. In prose SC, AS III, p. 17.

Dáire (2) : Gen. Dáire CO 53a ; Acc. Dáire CO 51c

Slain by Níul with the CO, CO 51

Father of **Bé Bhéassair**, wife of **Níul**

Dardán : Nom. Dardán CO 10a, 11a, 11c ; Dat. Dardán CO 13b, 15b, Dhardán CO 14b. 'Dardanus'

Patronymic : m. íoib CO 10a

Carries **Eileachtra** (Electra), CO 10

Obtains the CO, CO 11

Slays **Sádan**, CO 11

In Classical mythology, the mortal son of Jupiter by Electra that founded Troy and its ruling dynasty

Dealbhaoith : Gen. Dealbhaoith CB 4a

Father of Aoife, CB 4

Dearg : Acc. Dearg CO 6d

Slain by Saturn at Magh Glinne

Dearg is a generic name used for opponents in the Fenian cycle. There are a goodly number in *DF* and at least 11 different ones in AS.

Déidgheal : Nom. Deidgeal SF 43d

Slain at Móin Mhafaídh

The grave of Déidgheal, King of Alba (who was slain by **Fionn**) at Móin Macha is mentioned in *DF* lay XLII, q. 75.

Deighrinn : Acc. Deighrinn CO 6d

Slain by **Sádorn** at Magh Glinne

Dia : Dat. Dhia SCP 11a, Dhía SCA 12a. '(The Christian) God'

Diarmaid : Voc. Diarmaid CC 2b

Patronymic : mac Cearbhoill, CC 2

Addressed by **Oisín** as recipient of CC, CC 2 & passim

The famous hero of the *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* and subject of many lays and poems. He appears frequently throughout the Fenian cycle. He is associated with the banners in *DF* lay LXVI, discussed in ch. V.

Díolus : Dat. Díolus CO 18b
Son of **Ilus** to whom the sword was given

Donnghus : Nom. Donnghas SCP 29d, Donnghus, SCA 52d, Donnghus SCA 25d, SCP 53d ; Gen. Dhanngghosa SCP 32d, Donnghusa SCA 28d
A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party
His hound is identified as Fear Baoth 'Reckless One,' SCA 28
He is among the warriors in the 'Dord Fhiansa,' AS II, p. 5. *DF* lay XII relates that there are 10 *féinidhe* of this name. In prose SC, AS III, p. 25.

Dubhthach (mac Dáire) : Gen. Dubhthach SF 23b
Patronymic : m. Dáire
Styled *aird-rí Easpainne*, 'High-king of Spain'
Destroyed by SF

Dubhthach (mac Dubh) : Nom. Dubhthach SF 43b
Patronymic : m. Duibh
Slain at the battle of Ceann Cluig
The graves poem (*DF* lay XLII, q. 110) says that there is a standing stone on his grave, erected by **Fionn**, at Ceann Cluidh Chruaidh.

Eachlach : Nom. Eachlach CO 99b
'Messenger' with epithet 'of the Black Mountain'

Eachtair : Nom. Eachtair CO 38b, 39a, 40a, 41a ; Dat. Eactair CO 37c. 'Hector'
Patronymic : mac Primh CO 39d 'Hector'
(Also in CO 39, where the scribe has written Earcoil for Eachtair, clearly in error.)
Given the CO, which he wields through the Trojan War, CO 37 & ff.
Killed by **Aichil** (Achilles), the sword passing to **Einiás** (Æneas), CO 41
Hector, the warrior in the *Iliad* and other Classical epic

Éadaoin : Dat. Eadoin SCP 109c ; Eattaoin SCA 105c
One of the Fenian women who is given a ring
Also mentioned *DF* lay XII, q. 31 in the household of **Fionn**.

Ealéana : Gen. Eléna CO 33d, 35b. 'Helen'
Carried off by **Alaxandair** (Paris)
The face that launched a thousand ships

Éanna : Acc. Eanna SCA 21b, Éanna SCP 18b
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue
An Éanna is also listed among the *féinidhe* in *DF* XII q. 21.

Eanán (mac Labhair Thuinne) : Nom. Enan SCP 74a, 85b, Enann, SCA 80a, Enna SCA 71a ; Dat. hEnán SCA 89b
Patronymic : m. Labhair Thuinne SCA 71a, m. Labhair Tuinne SCP 74a
King of the *sidh*, husband of **Craíbhfhinn/Croifhionn**, father of **Uathach** and of **Sgáthach** in SCA 72
A shape shifter, he was the churl of SCA 47 & ff., SCP 51 & ff.
Discusses the marriage proposal with **Sgáthach**, SCA 77-80, SCP 80-1
In prose SC, AS III, pp. 19-20. A *færy* king, otherwise unknown.

Earcuil : Nom. Earcail CO 22a, 27a, 30a, 32a, Earcoil CO 30d, 31a, Earcail CO 19d, 26a
Ercuil CO 20a, Ercuil CO 24c ; Dat. hEarcail CO 25a. 'Hercules, (Herakles)'
Kills Laimheadhón (Laomedon) and takes his wife, CO 19
Styled as King of Troy CO 20

Gives the CO to **Iásón** (Jason), CO 22

Retakes the CO and bestows it on **Prímh** (Priam), whom he frees, CO 25 & ff.

Slain by **Prímh**, CO 32

This is the Classical hero-god figure. The death of Hercules in this lay is an *oidheadh* found in no other known text Classical or otherwise.

Eileachtra : Acc. Eileachtra CO 10c. 'Electra'

Taken over the wall by her son **Dardán** (Dardanus)

Mother of Dardanus by Jupiter in Classical mythology

Eimhear Alpa : Nom. Eimhear Alpa CO 96c ; Dat. Eimhear Alpa CO 97a

Father of **Bé Thuinne**

An otherwise unknown personage, but the name is used of others (cf. AS II, p. 186)

Einías : Nom. Einías CO 42a, Eneas CO 44, Enías CO 47a ; Dat. Eanáas CO 45a, 46b, Einías CO 41d. 'Æneas'

Patronymic : m. Ainicheiss 41d

Receives the CO from, CO 41

Departs for Italy, CO 42

Kills the giant **Uargháoth** CO 44a

Gives the CO to **Silbhí** (Silvius), CO 47b

The hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, but a traitor in Dares Phrygius' account of the fall of Troy

Eitheor : Dat. Eatoir SF 30b, Eitheór SF 29a

Double Patronymic: m. Cuinn m. Cearmotó, SF 29

Nicknamed: m. Cuill, 'son of hazel,' SF 30, 31

Slain by **Sgoran**, SF 31

Eitheor is otherwise unknown, but his genealogy connects him with well-known figures in the Gaelic tradition

Eochaidh Arm-rúaidh : Gen Eachaigh arm-rúaidh CC 5b

Leader of the fifth troop at the battle of Áth Luan

There are multiple *féinidhe* of this name in *DF* and the *Agallamha*, and it is not possible to connect this reference with any particular one of them.

Failbhe : Nom. Failbe SCA 25b, Failbhe SCA 49a , Dat. Failbe SCA 27c

Patronymic : m. Floinn SCA 49a

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party, equivalent to Fál in P

His hound is identified as Fear Glinne, 'Man-Killer,' SCA 27

Failbhe receives a mention in S, l. 306

Fál : Nom. Fál SCP 29b, 55c, Dat. Fál SCP 31c

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party, equivalent to **Failbhe** in A

His hound is identified as Fear-glinne, 'Man-Killer' (the same as **Failbhe**'s), SCP 31

This is Fenian warrior Fál Feadha, who is common in the lays, and this identification is made in the prose SC, p. 17.

In prose SC, AS III, p. 17, and also later in the *Agallamh* at p. 180.

Faoi(dh) : Acc. Faoídh SCA 21d, Faoi SCP 18d

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

In prose SC, AS III, p. 16. The name is a word meaning 'Voice.'

Faolán : Nom. Fáolán SCA 14d

A Fenian warrior. Replaced in the equivalent list (q. 13) of P by **Cairbre** (3)

This is most likely the son of **Fionn** – cf. *DF* III, p. 363 s.n. 2 Fáolán – but a number of warriors of this name are found in *DF*, S, and AS, and the identification is uncertain.

Faolchú : Nom. Fáolchú SCP 13c, 'Wolf'

A Fenian warrior ; he is not in the list in the A recension

In prose SC, AS III, p. 15. Also in the 'Dord Fiansa' list, AS II, p. 4. Killed by Clann Morna, *DF* lay XXXIX q. 19.

Fathadh : Nom. Fathadh SF 48b

Slain at Ollarbh

Fathadh is discussed as a mythological figure in the introduction to *DF* III, pp. lxiii-lxix.

Murphy considers him a fiery otherworld figure. He is mentioned in S 4 times.

Fear Díadh : Nom. Fear Díadh CO 81d

Patronymic *mac Damháin*

The foster-brother of **Cú Chulainn** whom he kills in the *Táin*

Fearadhach : Nom. Fearadhach SCA 15b, SCP 14b

A British Fenian king, son of High King **Iobhair**

Also mentioned in prose SC, AS II, p. 15.

Feargus : Nom. Feargus CO 74a, 75c, 80d, 90a ; Gen. Fhearguis CO 90d ; Dat. Feargus CO 89b, Fheargus CO 72d

Patronymic : m. Róigh CO 72b, 75a

Given the CO by **Cú Chulainn**, CO 72

Uses the CO in Alba to kill **Ibhual** and 700 men, CO 74

Asks whether he is the chosen champion against Acoll, CO 80

Slain by **Lughaidh**, **Oilill**'s blind spearman, CO 89

The abdicated king of Ulster that sides with the Connaughtmen in the *Táin* because of the fashion that Conchubhar used him to trick Deirdre and Naoise to return. He is slain by **Oilill** in jealousy because of his involvement with **Meadhbh**.

Fíamhain : Nom. Fíamhain CO 81b

Patronymic : m. Foraoí

An Ulster warrior

Fiodhabhlach : Gen. Fiodhabhlach SF 24c

Styled : aird-rí Aissia, 'High king of Asia'

Slain by **Manannán**

Fionn : Nom. Fionn CC 16c, 18a, 26b, 27b, 36d, 40b, 43a, SCA 13c, 17a, 23b, 24d, 26a, 39a, 55a, 59a, 70a, 90b, 100c, 102a, 102c, 103a, 104a, 105a, 108a, 113a, SCP 12c, 21a, 27b, 28d, 30b, 41a, 50c, 57a, 61a, 73a, 94b, 104b, 105a, 106c, 108a, 109a, 112b, 117a, SF 41a, 55d ; Voc. Fhinn CC 41a, 48a, SCA 85a, 86b, SCP 59d, Finn SCA 57d ; Gen. Fhinn CO 99a, Finn CC 10c, 52a, CO 109d, SCA 13b, SCP 17a, 82a ; Dat. Fhionn CC 27d, 51b, SCP 70d, Fionn CC 16a, 16b, SCA 56c, SCP 58c ; Acc. Finn SCA 96d, Fionn SCA 75b, SCP 78b

Patronymic : m. Cumhaill SCA 24d, 60b, 86b, 87b ; m. Cumail CC 52d, SCA 101b, SF 42b ; m. Cumhoill SCP 28d, 90b, 107d ; m. Qmaill CC 33b, SCA 96d ; m. Qmhaill SCA 57d, SCP 59d ; m. Qmhoill SCP 89b

Double patronymic : m. Cumail m. Trenmhoir CC 31b ; m. Cumhaill m. Tréinmhoir SCA 67d, 75d, SCP 70d ; m. Qmaill m. Treinmóir, CC 20b ; m. Qmhoill m. Tréinmhoir SCP 78b
By Patronymic and Seat : m. Cumhail a hAlmhain, SCA 79d, m. Cumail Almhaine CC47d, m. Cumhaill a h-Almhoin SCP 62b, m. Cumhaill Almhainí SCA 66d (see note), m. Cumhoill Almhuiní SCP 72d, m. Cumoill Ailmhuiní SCP 69d, m. Qmaill a hAlmhaine, SCA 96d ; m. Qmhoill a h-Almhuin SCP 82d

By seat : Fionn Almhan, CC 27d ; Fionn a Formáoil CC 36d

By Matronymic : m. Muirne SCP 100d, 107b

Slays **Mac Luighdheach** with CC, CC 10

Receives the CC, CC 16

Makes the CC a contest prize, CC 18

Contests with **Caoilte** for the sword, CC 26 & ff.

Sends **Cnú Deireóil** and **Daighre** hunting with **Oisín**, SCA 17, SCP 21

His hound identified as Bran, SCA 25. He is described SCA 29-39, SCP 33-4

Responds to **Oisín's** challenge by addressing Bran with the list of victories, SCA 39 & ff., SCP 42 & ff.

Fails to subdue the boar, SCA 55, SCP 57

Addresses the færy-churl, saying that he will follow him in return for the release of his men on the hunt, SCA 59, SCP 61

Asks the færies who they are, SCA 70, SCP 73

Requests to wed **Sgáthach**, SCA 75, SCP 79

Receives requital for the trickery of the hunt and a dowry from **Eanáin**, which includes the SC, SCA 82-8, SCP 87-92

Put to sleep by **Sgáthach's** fairy music, SCA 96d

Tells the tale to the incredulous *fian*, for whom no time has passed, SCA 100 & ff., SCP 106 & ff

Shews the SC, SCA 102, SCP 108

Distributes the fairy treasure, including the SC, which goes to **Caoilte**, SCA 105 & ff., SCP 108 & ff.

Prophecies the coming of **Patraic**, SCA 113, SCP 117

Owner of SF, obtained by him at q. 41

Usually referred to as *mo rí* by **Oisín** in SF, 1 & passim

The *Ríghfhéinidh* and hero of the Fenian cycle

Fionnchadh : Nom. Fionnchadh SCA 14a, SCP 13a

A Fenian warrior

Well-attested in the early tradition : mentioned in the prose SC, AS III, p. 15, and more than 40 other places in AS, yet he is only mentioned once (l. 267) in S, and there are no other references to him in DF or in the later lays printed in *LnaF*.

Fionntan : Nom. Fionntan SF 8c

Identified as of Dún Feart

Listed as one of the surviving ancients along with **Caoilte** and **Oisín**. Vid. discussion of his relation to the tradition of the lays in ch. II (c) and V (b) ; the 'Colloquy of Fintan and the Hawk of Achill' is a model for the lays in this study.

Fíthiol : Nom. Fithil, CC 32c, 38d, Fithiol CC 29d, 37a ; Gen. Fithil CC 42a, 46d

Father of Flaithrí, CC 37

Chief of **Cormac's** judges, who is associated with sections of the *Seanchus Mór*. Cf. part I ch. X. He is usually presented as a son of **Cumhall** and thus brother of **Fionn**. He and **Flaithrí** also arbitrate between **Fionn** and **Cormac** in DF lay VI. He is well-attested in the Fenian tradition, **Cormac** cycle, and legal texts.

Flaithrí : Nom. Flaithri CC 37c

Son of **Fíthiol**, arrives in the retinue of **Cormac**

One of **Cormac's** judges, fairly well-attested. Also presented as the son of **Fíthiol** in AS II, p. 83.

Forann : Nom. Forann SCA 15b, 20b, SCP 14b, 15a, 16b, 17b ; Dat. Forann SCP 24c ; Acc. Forann SCA 16b

As *mac Rí Breatan*, SCA 16c, SCP 16c, 20b, 24c

A British Fenian king, son of High King **Iobhair**

Takes a third of the foreigners and mercenaries of the *fiana* on his hunt, SCA 16

Accompanied by an envious retinue of musicians, SCA 20-2

In Classical Gaelic, this name is the term for Pharaoh ; it carries connotations of royalty and overtones of exoticism. Apart from the prose SC (AS II, pp. 15 & 16), he is not found outwith

the lay.

Fosgadh : Acc. Fosccadh SCP 18d, Fosgadh SCA 21d
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue
The name is a word meaning 'sound.'

Gabhann (?) : Gen. Gabhann CB 11c.
in phrase *dubhán Gabhann*, 'Gabhann's kidney? hook?' as a treasure of the CB. The text of the line is uncertain, and this may be a ghost name caused by the corruption of a phrase not understood by the scribe.

Garbán : Nom. Garban SF 45d
Slain at Sliabh Fúaid

Giollan(n)raidh : Nom. Giollannraidh SCA 16a, Giollanraidh SCP 16a
A Fenian warrior in **Forann**'s party
A corruption of Giolla an Ríogh?

Glas : Nom. Glas, SCA 52b, Glass SCA 25c, SCP 55b ; Dat. Glas SCA 28a, SCP 32a
Patronymic : mac Eadair, SCA 25
Alternative Patronymic : mac Gaoidhil, SCP 29
A Fenian warrior in **Fionn**'s own hunting party, SCA 25, SCP 29
His hound is identified as Eitioll, SCA 28, and as Aithim SCP 32a
In AS, he appears only in the lay and the prose SC, III, p. 17. Several Fenian warriors with the name Glas are found in DF with different patronymics ; it is not clear whether these are variant identifications of his father or different warriors altogether. Murphy (DF III index s.n.) observed that most of these figures are associated with Clann Morna.

Glasanroidh : Nom. Glasannroidh SCA 16a
A Fenian warrior in **Forann**'s party, equivalent to P's **Glaslaith**.

Glaslaith : Nom. Glaslaith SCP 16a
A Fenian warrior in **Forann**'s party, equivalent to A's **Glasanroidh**.

Goibhne : Gen. Goibhniinn CB 11b
In phrase *crios Goibhniinn*, 'belt of Goibhne,' one of the treasures of the CB.
The craftsman-god ; cf. *EIHM* pp. 314-17.

Gola : Nom. Gola SF 27b
Identified with *rí Sigir*, 'the King of Sigear,' a title also found at 6a, 25d without the name
Pays **Cairbre** (2) fifty ounces of gold for the praise of the SF

Gola Gallamhoil : Nom. Gola CO 13a, 14a, Gola Gallamhoil CO 12d ; Gen. Gola CO 15a, Golá CO 14d
Son of **Sadán**, CO 12
Makes peace with **Dardán** by marriage alliance of his daughter **Bé Chrotha**, CO 13 & ff.
An invented personage, not found in the Classical sources.

Grinne : Acc. Grinne CO 6d
Slain by **Sádorn** at Magh Glinne

Guaire : Nom. Guaire SCP 112d, Gúaire SCA 108d, 109a, 109c, 111a, SCP 115a ; Dat. Ghúaire SCP 113b
Patronymic : m. Neachtain SCA 111, m. Neachtain SCP 115a
The Fenian water-boy
Drops the SC into the spring at Duibh-eochair, SCA 111, SCP 115
Guaire is not found in S, but appears frequently in AS, often called Guaire giolla Finn. A

Guaire is also named in the Fenian household, *DF* lay XII, q. 16.

Iacóbó : Acc. Iacóbó CO 7d
Slain on Sliabh Tiris

Iásón : Nom. Iasón CO 24b, Iáson CO 22d, Dat. Iasoin CO 22b. 'Jason'

Patronymic : m. Essóin CO 24b

Receives CO from **Ercuil** (Hercules), CO 22

Killed by serpents CO 23

The story of his death by snakes is unknown in Classical sources. The confusion of the death of the sons of Laocoön is highly likely ; vid. part I. ch. X under Classical Sources.

Ilbreac : Gen. Ilbric CB 4b
Lover of **Aoife** and desired of **Iúchra**

Ilís : Nom. Ilis CO 18a ; Gen. Ilís CO 17d ; Dat. Ilís CO 17a

Receives the CO from **Trost** and gives it to his son **Laimheadhóin** (Laomedon)

Ílis : Acc. Ílis CO 7d
Slain on Sliabh Tiris

Inghean Cairbre : Acc. ingean deagh Chairbre CO 58d
Unnamed. Kidnapped by **Lomnochtach** in CO 58

Inghean Lugháine : (Indep.) Dat. ingean Lugháine CO 92b

Lover of **Íríal** who gives her the CO, which she gives her father, CO 92

The name recte Lughaine (Modern Úgaine)? It is clearly written with *L* in the MS, supported by alliteration.

Íob : Nom. Íob CO 8a, Íoib CO 9b ; Gen. Íoib CO 10a. 'Jove,' i.e. Jupiter

Steals the sword from **Sádorn** (Saturn), CO 8a

In patronymic of **Dardán mac Íoib**, CO 10a

Iobhar : Gen. Iobhair SCA 15d, SCP 14d, 15d

High King of Britain (SCA), father of **Ánluan**, **Forann**, and **Fearadhach**

Unattested apart from the lay and prose SC, *AS* III, pp. 15 & 16.

Iobhual : Acc. Ibhual CO 74d
Slain by **Feargus** in Alba

Iollann : Nom. Iollann 35b

Guard of the gold offered **Caoilte** by Fionn

There are a number of persons named Iollann in *DF* and *AS*, or Illann in *S*, and it is unclear whether this figure is to be identified with any particular one of them.

Íríal : Nom. Iríal CO 91a ; Dat. Íríal CO 90d

Patronymic: m. Conaill Cearnaigh CO 92a

Given the CO by **Meadhbh**, CO 90

Marries the daughter of **Lughaine** in Lochlann, CO 92

Iris : Nom. Iris CC 11a

Described as the 'hag of Gleann Marc,'

Gives the CC to her son **Sithbhac**

Iúchra : Nom. Iúchra CB 5a, Iuchra CB 4d ; Voc. Iuchra CB 6d

Love rival of **Aoife**, daughter of **Ábhartach**

Equivalent to Morann inghean Fionnachta in the 24 P 5 lay.

Íuil Séasair : Nom. Íuil Séasair CO 52a ; Acc. Íul Séasair CO 53d. 'Julius Cæsar'

As lover of **Bé Bhéasair**

This passage is likely corrupt and his name introduced in error ; vid. note A to CO and ch. IX under Classical Sources.

Lamh-fhada : Nickname and epithet of **Lugh**, q.v.

Laoghaire : Nom. Laoghaire CO 64a, 67b, Láoghaire CO 63c, 67d ; Voc. Láoghaire CO 68a
A watchman, flees from **Lomnochtach**, CO 63

An Ulster-cycle warrior ; he is one of those surpassed in the competition for the champion's portion by **Cú Chualainn** in *Fled Bricrend* in a passage upon which this episode is modeled. Vid. ch. IX under Native Sources for discussion.

Laimheadhón : Nom. Laimheadhón CO 19a ; Gen. Laimeadhón CO 26d, 30b, Laimeadóin CO 22b, Laimheadhóin CO 21a, Laimheadhón CO 25b, Láimheadhóin CO 20b ; Dat.

Laimheadhóin CO 18d

Also see **Prímh** for use as a patronymic (The additional form Láimheadháin is found at CO 32b in rhyme with *áig*.)

Receives CO from **Ilís** (Ilus), CO 19

Laomedon from Classical epic

(in) **Liath** a lúachair Deaghoidh : Acc. Liath CC 8b

Slain by CC

A nickname, 'the Grey one.' He is possibly to be identified as Liath Luachra, father of Conán, who is mentioned 6 times in *AS*. He appears in *DF* lays LXII and LXVI, where he is associated with Clann Morna at Cath Cnucha, but the lays contradict each other.

Loingseach : Nom. Loingseach CC 7d

Killed by CC

Patronymic *mac Domnainn* CC 7d

Lomnochtach : Nom. Lomnochtach CO 58a, 59a, 60a, 62a ; Dat. Lomnochtach CO 54d, 55d, 56b, 57d

Lover of **Caladh**

Given the CO by **Caladh**, CO 55

Abducts a daughter of **Cairbre (2)** in Erin, CO 58

Attacks Eamhain on Samhain night, CO 62

Defeated by **Muinreamhar**, who takes the CO

The name is 'Starkers' and is meant to be humorous ; the episode is a parody of the contest in *Fled Bricrend* ; vid. part I ch. IX.

Lucra : Nom. Lucra SF 20a

Crafted the SF

called *tríath na Marannmhál*, 'Lord of Marannmhal,' SF 20c

Lugh : Dat. Lugh CB 16b, SF 10a

By epithet: *Lámh-fhada*, 'long-arm' alone SF 12b

As owner of the CB, CB 16

Killed by the sons of **Cearmad**, CB 16

Beheads **Balor** and displays the head, SF 10-12

The Celtic hero-god who defeated **Balor** and the Tuatha Dé Danann at *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*

Lughaidh (1) : Nom. Lughaidh CO 89d

The blind spearman of King **Oilill** who kills **Fearghus** mac Róigh ; cf. the death of Fearghus in Kuno Meyer, *Death- Tales of the Ulster Heroes* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1906).

Lughaidh (2) : Nom. Lughaidh SCA 14d, SCP 13d

A Fenian Warrior, noted as being from Leitrim

There are a number of Fenian warriors bearing this name throughout the tradition, and it is not possible to disentangle them.

Lugháine : Nom. Lughaine CO 93a, Gen. Lughaini CO 95d
Vowel quantity is marked in the patronymic of his daughter in CO 93a
Obtains the CO from his daughter, CO 93
Vid. **Inghean Lugháine** for use as a patronymic

Mac Con : Gen. mhic Con SF 57b
In epithet *i Mumhain mhic Con*, 'in Mac Con's Munster'
Murphy equates him with Lughaidh mac Maicniadh a.k.a. mac Con in his index. It is to be noted that Lughaidh Mac Con was considered by Murphy and O'Rahilly on structuralist grounds to be the pseudo-historical title of euhemerised **Lugh**. In the Éarainn tradition of Munster he is the predecessor of **Cormac** as king, but as O'Daly notes in *Cath Maigh Mucrama*, he may be historical, and she argues that the name is from a primitive Goedelic reïnterpretation of Brittonic **Maponos*. The epithet for Munster is well explained, cf. *EIHM*, p. 278, O'Daly p. 6.

Mac Luighdheach : Nom. Mac Luighdheach CC 10 a
Slain by CC
No proper personal name is given, 'the son of Lughaidh.'
A figure of mythological origins ; cf. Murphy *DF* III, Appendix H.

Mac Muire : Nom. Mac Muire SF 63
Vid. **Criost**

Mac Tuire : Nom. deagh-mhac Tuire, CO 94a
No personal name is given
Kills **Lugháine**

Maine: Acc. Maine SCA 21b, SCP 18b
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

Mana Falúis : Nom. Mana CO 16a, Mana Falúis CO 15d
Son of **Bé Chrotha** and **Dardán**, CO 15
Gives the CO to **Trost**, CO 17
Invented to fill a gap in the Classical chronology

Manannán : Nom. Manannán CB10a, 18a, SF 15a, 16a, SF 24a, 33a, 38a ; Gen. Manannáin CB 11a, SCA 71d, Manannán CB 7d, Mhanannáin SF 18b, 25a ; Dat. Manannán CB 2a, SF 36b, 37a, Mhanannán SF 20d
Keeper of the crane CB 2, 7-10
Creator and sometimes possessor of the CB, CB 10&ff.
His treasures listed, CB 11-14
Father of **Craoibhfhinn**, the wife of **Eanan** and Queen of the *sídh*, SCA71
Orders the poisonous hazel cut, SF 16
Journeys to Asia and slays High-king **Fiodhabhlach** SF 24
Recovers the SF in battle in Fir Menía, SF 33
Gives the SF to **Tadhg**, SF 38
The Gaelic sea-god

Maol Chiar : Nom. Máol Chíar CO 109d ; Dat. Máol Chíar CO 110c
A cleric who has come into possession of the CO
Described as a smith's lad, CO 107

Meadhbh : Nom. Meadhbh CO 90b
Obtains the CO when **Oilill** has **Fearghus** slain, gives it to **Írial**

Queen of Connaught, wife of Oilill, lover of Fearghus

Originally a sovereignty goddess, she is euhemerised into the powerful queen of Connaught in the Ulster cycle.

Míl : Gen. Míleadh CB 17b

The name is simply the word 'Soldier.' A legendary conqueror of Ireland in the *Lebor Gabála*. The name commonly occurs in the phrase *m. Míleadh* and its variants, as a poetic name for the Gaedhil.

Minéalus : Nom. Minéalus CO 2c, Minélus CO 34b. 'Menelæus'

Gives sword to **Sádoirn** (Saturn), CO 2

His wife **Eléna** abducted by **Alaxandair** (i.e. Paris), CO 34

Mothla : Gen. Mothla SF 22c

Patronymic : *m. Méilge*

Styled *aird-rí Éigipte* 'High King of Egypt'

Destroyed by SF

Muinreamhar : Nom. Mhuinreamhor CO 67a, Muinreamhar CO 63d, 70a, Muinreamhor CO 67c ; Voc. Mhuinreamhair CO 65a, 66b, Muinreamhair CO 69a ; Gen. Mhuinremhair CO 64c ; Dat. Muinreamhar 71d

Patronymic : *mac Eirrhinn* CO 63d, 66b

An Ulster-cycle warrior with a minor rôle in *Fled Bricrend*.

Muirn : Acc. Muirn SF 39b

A woman abducted by **Cumhall**

Mother of **Fionn** : a character well-attested throughout the Fenian cycle (often with the epithet *Mhunchaomh* to distinguish her from other women of the same name). Murphy (*DF* III, 'Index of Heroes &c,' s.n. Muirne) argues that the nominative Muirne is superior, though rare in the lays.

Vid. *q.* as matronymic of **Fionn**.

Naoise : Nom. Naoíse CO 81c

An Ulster warrior, best known for eloping with Deirdre

Níul : Nom. Níuil CO 53a, Níul CO 50c ; Gen. Níuil CO 52b ; Dat. Niuil CO 54a, Níul CO 51a

Son of **Silbhí** and **Bé Milis**

Receives the CO from his mother, CO 51

Father of **Caladh**, CO 54

Oilill : Dat. Oillil CO 89d (earlier Ailill)

Causes **Fearghus** to be slain

King of Connaught, husband of **Meadhbh**

Oisín : Nom. Oisín CC 21b ; Voc. Oisín, SCA 17c, SCP 21c, 22b, Oissín CB 15a, SCA 19b

Patronymic : *m. Finn* CO 113b

Father of **Osgar** by *Cruimcheann*

Asks opening question in CB 1, 3.

Narrator of CC, CO, SC, SF

Proposes that CC be given by contest, CC 22

Challenges **Fionn** and Bran to hunt the boar, SCA 36

Given a golden ring by **Fionn** SCA 106, SCP 110

The son of **Fionn** and father of **Osgar** and surviving ancient, Oisín is one of the two narrators of the vast majority of lays and also a principal character in them. Also associated with both sets of the banners in the lays described in ch. XI of part I.

Osgar : Nom. Osgar CO 104d, SCA 108c ; Gen. Osgair CO 103a ; Dat. Osgcor, SCP 110c, Osgar CO 102d, 112b, SCA 106c

Matronymic : m. Cruimchinn, SCA 108c

Given the sword by **Aongus Gaoi Fuileach** CO 102

Given a fairy chess-set by **Fionn**, SCA 106, SCP 110

Son of **Oisín** and great champion of the *fian*. Associated with both sets of banners in ch. XI.

Pátraic (Naoímh) : Nom. Patraic SCA 115b ; Voc. Padruic CO 88a, Patruic SCA 117b, Phádrúic SCP 121b Phatraic CO 106c, 110b ; Abbreviated P', SCP 119b. 'S. Patrick,' the Apostle of Ireland

Patronymic : m. Alpruinn SCP 119b, m. Calproinn SCA 115a (from Latin Calpurnius)

By Epithet : Tailgean, SCP 117d, Tailgeann, SCP 118a, Tailghionn SCA 113d, 114a, Tháilghinn SCA 12b, Thailgin SCP 11b. 'Adze-head'

Foretold to receive the SC, SCA 115

All these lays, except possibly CB are mostly addressed to him

Speaker of CO 112-3

Pol : Gen. Poil CC 12d

Son of **Coirbre**

Given the CC

Prímh : Nom. Primh CO 37a, Prímh CO 25a ; Voc. Phrímh CO 26b ; Dat. Phrímh CO 27b, Primh CO 29c, 32b, 33b, Prímh CO 31d, Acc. Primh 30a. 'Priam'

Patronymic : mac Láimheadháin CO 32b, mac Láimheadhóin CO 31d

Also see **Eachtair** for use in his patronymic

Freed by **Earcuil** (Hercules), and given his freedom, the CO, and his wife **Achapa** (Hecuba) CO 25 & ff.

Father of **Alaxandair**, CO 33

Gives the CO to **Eactair** (Hector), CO 37

Ráin : Dat. Ráin SCA 28a

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn's** hunting party ; his hound is Garbh, 'Fierce' ; he is missing from the first enumeration of the list of **Fionn's** party in SCA 25-6, where the party, described as an octet plus **Fionn**, meets that number ; no one is missing from the second list in which he is added.

Riendolbh : Nom. Rinnolbh SCA 25b, Nom. Rindolbh SCP 29a, 53a ; Dat. Rindolbh SCA 27b, SCP 31b

A Fenian warrior in **Fionn's** own hunting party

His hound is identified as Éachtach, 'Mighty,' SCA 27, SCP 31

Also mentioned in the prose SC, AS III, p. 17.

Rocháomh : Dat. Rocháomh SCP 109d. 'Dearie'

One of the seven Fenian women given a ring by **Fionn** (missing from the list in A)

Ruithean : Dat. Ruithen SCP 109d

One of the seven Fenian women given a ring by **Fionn** (missing from the list in A)

Sadán : Nom. Sadán CO 11d ; Dat. Sadán CO 12a

Slain by **Dardán**

Father of **Gola Gallamhoil**

Unattested in Classical sources, a filler

Sádorn mac Pallóir : Gen. Sádoirn CO 6b, Sáduirn CO 4b, 5b ; Dat. Sadorn CO 37b, Sádoirn CO 2d. 'Saturn'

Patronymic : m. Pallóir CO 2d

Receives CO from Menelæus, CO 2

Kills **Sádorn mac Luain** and sons, CO 5
In battle of Magh Glinne, CO 6

Sádorn mac Luain : Nom. Sádorn CO 5a
Patronymic : m. Lúain

Killed by **Sádorn mac Pallóir**

Perhaps a scribal error has displaced another name. Mac Neill read this name as 'Sadhorn,' but he has apparently mistranscribed a sloppy accent with an ink blot at its end as a punctum marking lenition, which it is certainly not intended to be. Murphy's *index nominum* equates him with the preceding.

Seanach (1) : Acc. Seanach SCA 20c
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue
Also mentioned in the prose SC, AS III, pp. 15-6.

Seanach (2) : Nom. Seanach SCP 13c
Patronymic : m. Fir Chruinn

A Fenian warrior. **Súanán** has this place in the enumeration in A ; he has a patronymic mac Fir Thruim that rhymes better with Liathdruim. As one of those receiving a hunt, he cannot be equated fully with the preceding, though they are not unlikely to be the same at root. A warrior of this name is found in AS I, pp. 52-5. In A, **Suanán** fills his place.

Sgáthach : Nom. Sgathach SCP 75d, 77b, Sgáthach SCA 72d, 74b, 90c, Sgathoch SCP 94c

Daughter of **Eanan** and **Craoibhfhinn**

Discusses marriage to **Fionn** with her father, SCA 77, SCP 80-12

Puts the company to sleep with fairy-music after contracting marriage to **Fionn**, SCA 96, SCP 100

Probably the same as the otherworldly woman who teaches **Cú Chulainn**

Sgorán : Nom. Sgorán SF 31d ; Gen. Sgoráin SF 33d, 35d
Obtains the SF

The grave of Sgorán na Sgiath, a son of the King of Britain, is listed among the standing-stones of DF lay XLII, q. 71.

Silbhí : Nom. Silbhí CO 45d, Siluius CO 48a, 49a ; Dat. Silbhí CO 47d, thSílius CO 50b, 'Silvius'

Receives the CO from **Einias** (Æneas), CO 47

Father of **Níul**, CO 50

The son of Æneas in Virgil. The Latin and Irish forms of the names alternate according to metrical convenience.

Siothbhac : Nom. Sithbhac CC 12a Dat. Sithbhac CC 11b
Given the CC by **Iris**, CC 11
Gives it to **Pol** CC 12

Suanach : Acc. Suanach SCP 17c, Súanach SCA 21c
A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

Also mentioned in the prose SC, AS III, p. 16. In 'Caithréimh Fhinn,' Suanach is listed as one of the *cúigear tiompánach gan brón* in q. 23-4, *LnaF*, p. 269. A has **Seanach (1)** here.

Suanán : Nom. Súanán SCA 14c

Patronymic : m. Fir Thruim (Chuirb had been written and then deleted)

A Fenian warrior. P has **Seanach (2)**, in his place. He does nevertheless appear once in AS I, p. 129.

Tadhg : Nom. Tadg SF 37d ; Dat. Tadg SF 38a

Patronymic : m. Núadhat SF 37d, 38c

Given the SF by **Manannán**, SF 38

Fionn's maternal grandfather, originally a fire-god, he is common in mythical and Fenian tales.

Táilghinn : Epithet of **Pátraic**, q.v.

Tréanmhór : Nom. Tréanmor CC 14a Dat. Tréanmor CC 13d

Gives the CC to his in-laws, CC 14a

Vid. **Cumhall** for use in his patronymic ; **Fionn** for use in a double patronymic

Paternal grandfather of **Fionn** frequently referred to in the lays and *Agallamha*

Trost : Nom. Trost CO 16c, 17a ; Acc. tTrost CO 16a

Received the CO and uses it to seize Troy, CO 16

Passes the sword to **Ilís** CO 17

An invention used to bridge a chronological gap in the Classical sources

Uallach : Acc. Uallach SCA 20d, SCP 17d

A musician of **Forann**'s retinue

Uarghaoth : Nom. Úargháoth 43d, 44d

Patronymic : m. Mór-laoích CO 43c, 44c

An Italian giant slain by **Einias**, CO 44

Thereafter as name of the CO in 48b

Uathach : Nom. Uathach SCA 72c, SCP 75c

Son of **Eanán**, King of the *sídh*

A shape-shifter, he was the enchanted boar pursued by **Fionn** and Bran, SCA 31 & ff., SCP 35 & ff.

X : Index Locorum et Gentium

The index of the places which appear in these texts shall be arranged in accordance with the following principles :

The form of each entry is as follows : 1. The Gaelic nominative, as standardised in the second line of the editions, shall be listed first and shall be the form used for alphabeticisation. Case forms that appear in the text shall be listed thereafter. Full listing of the occurrence of each will be given. 2. A note of the use of the place in the text where it appeared, as appropriate. 3. A literal translation of those with apparent meanings follows. No attempt is made to find root meanings of places. Because the proper noun is the last refuge of the perplexed, no translations involving proper names within toponyms are done (with the exception of Eas Ruaidh, which is explained thus in *dinnsheanchas*). 4. Discussion of possible places with which a place is or may be identified is next. Selected appearance of the name in other mediæval texts significant to this study, especially the other lays of *Duanaire Finn*, other Fenian lays, prose tales – especially *AS* – shall be noted. Hogan's *Onomasticon* shall be consulted throughout, as will Murphy's own indices. A lack of translation or of location of an item is not infrequent, as many of the places are obscure and not otherwise attested.

Such terms as refer more properly to tribes or nations than to the land are italicised in the initial listing. Terms immediately recognisable, e.g. Aissía, 'Asia,' are not given full treatment, but have been indexed fully. The forms found in the prose tale of SC from P are noted only when significantly variant from those in the lay.

In this index only, the following abbreviations will be used in addition to *AS* and *DF* : H – Fr. Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin : Hodges & Figges, 1910) ; S – Whitley Stokes, ed., 'Acallamh na Senórach,' *Irische Texte* IV : 1 (Leipzig : S. Herzel, 1900). References to H are assumed to be under the same toponym unless otherwise stated (apart from minor spelling variants) ; line references to S are given.

Achadh Abhla : Gen. Achoidh Abhla SF 47c

Battlefield

'The plain of Abhla.' H lists one in Co. Sligo and one near **Magh Tuireadh**.

Aissía : Dat. Aissía SF 24d

Fiodhabhlach is high king of A.

Asia

Alba : Gen. Alban CB 12a ; Dat. Albain CO 73b

Often also in phrase *rí Alban*, 'the King of Alba/Scotland'

Scotland

Almhain : Gen. Ailmhuiní, SCP 69d, Almhain SCA 79d, Almhaine CC 47d, SCA 69d, Almhainí SCA 66d, Almhan CC 27d (rhymed thus), Almhuiní SCP 72d, na h-Almhaine CC 17d ; Dat. h-Almhoin SCP 62, h-Almhuin SCP 82d

Always affixed to the name of Fionn, designating his seat (with gen. or preposition a[s]). The varying gen. forms cannot be standardised for metrical reasons.

The Fenian references to Almhain, Fionn's seat, are too numerous to list. For a discussion of the significance of the place, cf. Ó hÓgáin, pp. 81-5.

[The Hill of] Allen in Co. Kildare

Aradhuigh : Nom. pl. Aradhaigh, SCP 26d, Aradhuigh SCP 25d

The men of Dal nAraidhe, the coastal district of S. Antrim and Down.

Asal : Gen. Asail CB 12d

Possible personal name or place, found in phrase *cnamha muc n-Asal*, a treasure in the CB. Multiple places of this name are given in Hogan. Murphy did not index the name either as a person or place.

Áth Buidhneach : Dat. (uas)an Áth Buidhneach CC 10b
Given as the site of the slaying of the son of Lughaidh.
'Ford of the Troops'

Áth Cróich : Dat. Áth Cróich SCA 43b
Site where nine boars were killed by Bran.
It is perhaps best to read the name literally as 'Crocus-Ford.' The well-known Áth Croich at Shannon Harbour between Munster and Athlone is not possible, because it has a short *o*, yet the long *o* in the poem is confirmed by rhyme. No long-*o* names are attested.

Áth Cuain : emendatio in SCP 46b. P (body text) Áth Lúain, a slip repeating from the line above, but read as Áth Búain by NiS. The present form is from LMR.
Site where a boar was killed by Bran.
Location unknown. Lit. (from gen. pl. of *cuain*) 'Ford of the Troops/Wolf-Packs,' or (from *cuan*), 'Ford of the Bend'

Áth Líag : Gen. Átha Líag CC 44b
Site of Cormac's garden.
'Ford of the Standing-Stones.' A common name, it is impossible to choose among the many places. (H gives also an Áth Liac Finn, site of a Fenian battle ; this latter form is also explained in the *dinnshenchas* [in Meyer item IX] and *DF* lay LVIII, q. 27. It is not certain that these places are to be equated.)

Áth Luain : Dat. Ath Lúain CC3a, Áth Lúain CC 5a, SCP 46a
Site where a boar was killed by Bran.
Not otherwise attested in *DF* or the more common Fenian texts, but twice more in *AS* I, 206, 216.
'Ford of Splendour,' Athlone

Áth Modhuirn : Gen. Átha Modhuirn SF 50c
Battlefield
H lists a battle at Áth Modhairne (A.I. s.a. 1210), placing it along the border of the Cénel Eoghain and Cenel Conaill.

Áth Móna : Dat. Áth Mona SF 46c
Site of two Fenian battles not otherwise attested.
'Ford of the Bog'? (The older gen. *móna*, which is confirmed by rhyme, is not attested in the modern language). Comparison could be made with the unplaceable Áth Mónadh in H, which has the usual gen.

Áth na n-Éag : Dat. Áth na nÉg CC 5d
Place where a hundred men were slain.
Lit. 'The Ford of Death' ; the poem places it 'on the Shannon.' No such place is attested.

Áth Néid : Dat. Áth Néid SCA 42a, SCP 45a
Site where a boar was killed by Bran
'Ford of the Warrior'

Beann Éadoir : Gen. Bheinne hEadóir SF 49b (The long *o* is obviously an error ; not only is it otherwise unattested in the name of a well-known place, but it is rhymed with Brain.)
A battle site.
The usual name for the Hill of Howth, Co. Dublin. Howth is mentioned frequently in both *S* (15 times) and in *AS* (11 times). The place would have resonances of the lost Fenian tale listed in Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 43. It also resonates as the heroic historical backdrop of Viking battles under Maelsechlainn (Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, p. 149) and Brian Bórainne's raids surrounding the battle of Glen Mama (*ibid.*, pp. 108-117).

Bearnas : Dat. Bearnois SCP 49a, Bearnuis SCA 23a, Bearnus SCA 98c, Bhearnus SCA 46a, mBéarnois SCP 27a, mBéarnuiss SCP 102c

Place whence Fionn begins the hunt, and where the hunt gathers again at its completion

A *dinnsheanchas* of Bearnas is given in the opening quatrains of *DF* lay XIV, where it is called 'the gorge of the pigs of Balor' (Bearnus Mhuici Balair). Another boar-hunt passes through in *DF* lay LIV, q. 14.

Lit. 'The Gorge, The Chasm,' it is identified by H as the Barnsmore Gap (5m NE of Donegal, Co. Tyrconnell).

Beirge : Gen. Beirge SF 50d

Located *os Bóäinn*, 'over the Boyne' in the text.

Otherwise unknown.

Beirbhe : Gen. Beirbhe SF 52a, CO 91c

Bergen (in Norway). Common in Fenian literature ; it is mentioned eight times in *DF* as a source of invaders or a place for foreign adventures of the *fiana*.

Bóäinn (later Bóinn) : Dat. Bóäinn SF 50d

The Boyne

Boirche : Gen. Boirche SCA 41b, SCP 44b

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

3 other mentions in *AS*

Boirche Mourne, i.e. the district of the Mountains of Mourne, Downshire, as identified by H. The name is explained by H as coming from a legendary shepherd named Boirche to Ros, King of Ulster.

Bolgraighe : Gen Bolccraighe SF 47a

A man named Cormac is slain here. It cannot be Cormac Mac Airt ; he choked to death at the *ráth* of Spelán (cf. Ó Cathasaigh, pp. 67-72).

H found a 'Bolgraidhi i Críchaib Conaill' in the MacFirbis Genealogies, but it is also obscure.

Breatan : Gen. pl. Breatan SCA 16c, 22b, Breaton, SCP 16c, 20b, 24b, mBreaton SCA 15a

Home of Iobhair, *Rí Breatan* ; and his 3 Fenian sons, Ánluan, Forann, and Fearadach. Britons, Welsh

na Buille : Gen. na Buille, CO 51d

Murphy and Mac Neill tried to emend the phrase *ri na buille* into other words ; there is no reason why it cannot be a tribal name in its context, and there is no need for emendation. Prof. Gillies suggests that this may be corruption from Latin Apulia.

Carraig : Gen. Cairrge SF 49a

Battlefield

Lit. 'Rock, Crag.' Toponyms with *carraig* are very common and cannot be placed without a further description. 5 places with a *carrac* element are found in *S*. There are 3 full pages in *H* s.v. *carrac*. The *Index to the Townlands and Towns...* gives 7 1/2 pages of places named Carrick and Carrig. The place is everywhere and nowhere.

Ceann Aisi : Gen. Cinn Aisi SF 44a

Battlefield

Ceann Cláire : Gen. Ceann Chláire SF 45a

Battlefield

Another Fenian mention *AS* I, p. 96

Potentially that identified by H as the Hill of Knocklong, Co. Limerick.

Ceann Cluigh : Gen. Chinn Chluig SF 43
Dubhthach son of Dubh slain in battle.

Ceann Fheabhrat : Gen. Cinn Fheabhraidh SCP 44c, Cinnfheabhrat SCA 41c
Site where a boar was killed by Bran

4 other occurrences in AS

Kinfavra, near Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, identified by Murphy in the index. (S identified it as 'one of the Ballyhowra mountains, co. Cork.') The length of the entry in H shews the former as an oft-cited place.

Ceann Tíre : Gen. Cinn Tíre SF 53a
Battlefield

1 citation in S ; 1 in AS.

'The Headland,' specifically the Mull of Kintyre. As Islay is mentioned in the same quatrain, it is almost certainly specific.

Céis Coruind : Gen Chéisi Coruind SF 48d
Battlefield

Identified by Murphy in his index by H as Keshcorran, Co. Sligo. It appears in *DF* lays XXXV q. 108, XXXVI q. 27, LXII q. 38. The Fenian associations relate to a *bruidhean* tale (cf. O'Curry, *MS Materials*, p. 313), which adventure may be the same as the battle mentioned here.

Clann Adhnúaill : Dat.pl. clannuibh Adhnúaill CO 73d
Obscure.

Cluan Meann Muirisge : Gen. Chlúana Meann Muirisge SF 44d
Battlefield

'Meadow of the Clear Sea-Coast' Location obscure.

Clochar : Gen. Clochair SCA 43c, Clochoir SCP 45c

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

'Stony-place.' There are several hundred places bearing the name in H, including compounds. It is quite possible that this is an everywhere and nowhere name, but if it is specific, the likeliest is one in Tyrone, where it was a bishopric mentioned in numerous documents. 'Stone-Church.'

Cnámh-Choill : Gen. Cnamh Choille SCA 43c

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

The place is visited by Oisín and S. Patrick in S, l. 703. 2 (perhaps 3, if Cnámh-choill Cró is the same) occurrences in AS **Creamh-choill** is the equivalent form in P.

'Bone-Wood.' H gives several forms, all of which refer to Cneamhchoill or Cleghill, Co. Tipperary, 1 1/2m E of Tipperary town.

Colamhnaigh : Gen. pl. Colamnach SF 50a

Involved in a battle.

Cf. Murphy's glossary note on the word *colamha* and E. Knott, 'Varia II, I. Colomain na Temra,' *Ériu* XIV (1946), p. 144. These scholars agree that the term is at root the Latin loan 'Column,' used as an alternate name of the Lúaigni Temra based on their function of protecting that seat.

Craobh-Ruaidhe : Gen. na Craobh-Rúaidhe CO 61d

The great hall of the Ulster court at **Eamhain Macha** or the warriors attached to that court. 'The Red-Branch'

Creamh-Choill : Gen. Creamh Choille SCP 44a

'Garlic-wood.' Such places are found in the *Index of Townlands* in Co. Tyrconnell and Co.

Galway. H lists others of imprecisely known location in Co. Wicklow, Sligo, Antrim, Downshire, and Co. Tyrone. It may also be noted that the place may either be a deliberate substitution or slip based on modern pronunciation for the **Cnámh-Choill** in A.

Cronn-mhóin : Gen. Cronnmhóna SF 46d

Battlefield

1 further mention in AS.

'Ruddy Moor'

Cruim-gleann : Gen. Croimghlinne SCP 55d, Cruimghlinne SCA 27d, Dat. Chruimghlinn SCP 29b

Epithet of Cúan

Named independently in the poem on the drinking horns in S, l. 156 ; and named by Oisín in a quatrain AS III, p. 151.

'Winding Glen' a common toponym in H, and five other places in *DF*, but there is a specifically Fenian one among them in H : Cromghlenn na bhFiann, which is the glen of the river Flesk at Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Cruithean-thúath : Dat. gCruithean-thúait SF 22a

'Province of the Cruithne,' 'Pictavia,' 'Land of Redshanks.' It is unclear whether this is a reference to the Cruithne in Ireland or to the Pictish kingdom(s) of modern Scotland.

Cnucha : Dat. Cnucha SF 40b

The site of the battle in which Cumhaill, Fíonn's father, was slain by Goll, as described in the tale 'Fotha Catha Cnucha' (in Lebor na hUidre, trans. in Nagy, *Wisdom of the Outlaw*, pp. 218-21) and frequently mentioned throughout the tradition, e.g. the latter portion of *DF* lay XXII, 9 times in AS— but only twice in S.

'Hillock.' Located *os Liffe Laighean* 'over the Liffey of the Leinstermen' (SF q. 40b) near Dublin, modern Castletown.

Connachta : Gen. pl. Connacht SCA 14b, SCP 13b ; Acc. Pl. cConnusa (a slip for cConnachta), SF 57d

'Connaught, the Connaughtmen'

Cúl Dreimhne : Gen. Chuile Dreimhni CO 105b

'The Ridge of Frenzy,' located by H in Carbury, Co. Sligo. The battle of Cúl Dreimhne is the historical downfall of Diarmaid m. Cerball and the traditional cause of the exile of S. Columba, vid. *AFM* s.a. 555, vol. I, pp. 192-5. If the well-known battle of Cúl Dreimhne is truly intended, then the author is breaking the chronology of the cycle. It may be a howler done on purpose for comic effect.

Dál (n)Aráidhe : Gen. Dhál nAráidhe SCA 30d, Dhal Aruidhe SCP 34d

Son of the king of Dal nAráidhe involved with Bran in P (possibly corrupt)

Bran is in truth the son of the king of Dal nAráidhe in A

A place of very frequent mention in S, but only 2 other places in AS

The coastal district of S. Antrim and Down

Danmarg : Gen Danmarg SF 54b

High King Aicil of D. slain

Denmark

Drobhaois : Nom. Drobhaois SCP 25c

The River Drowes

Druim Deilg : Dat. Druim Deilcc SF 61a

Last meeting place of the *fian*

'Thorny Ridge'

Druim in Eóin : Gen. Droma an Eoin SCP 43a, Droma in Eóin SCA 40a
 Site where a boar was killed by Bran
 'Ridge of Birds'

Druim Lighean : Gen. Droma Lighean SCA 42d, SCP 43d
 Site where a boar was killed by Bran
 H places the only D. Lighean in Kilmore and Ballintemple, Co. Cavan. (Also possible 'Ridge of Leinster(men),' if one reads *Laighean*. H found a Druim Laighean townland & parish in Bunratty, Co. Clare.)

Druim Lir : Dat. Druim Lir CC 1c
 Place where Caoilte buried his sword
 'Ridge of the Sea'

Druim ós Bothaibh : Gen. Droma ós Bothaibh SCA 43d
 Site where a boar was killed by Bran
 'Ridge over Botha.' *Botha* is literally 'Cottages'; it is not surprising to see that H found many different places of that name, any number of which could have a ridge above them.

Duibh-cheachoir : Dat. Duibhcheachoir SCP 2d, 111d, 112a
 Place where the dipper is lost in the depths of the spring
 In the prose tale, it is Duibhcheachoir Droma Dá Oss
 'Black Quagmire'

Duibh-eochair : Dat. Duibheochair SCA 107d, 108a, Dubheochair SCA 1d
 Variant of the above
 'Black Verge.' The place is unattested in Irish, but in Scottish Gaelic usage, it is the Clydebank. The site in the lay is, however, unquestionably in Ireland in the context of S. Patrick's tour in the *Agallamh*.

Dubh-Shliabh : Gen. Duibh-Shléibhe CO 99b
 Used as a personal epithet of the Eachlach dubh
 Parallel use in S as the home of Der dhubh (ll. 3605 & 3612)
 'Black Mountain' H identified the frequent Fenian references to this place as being to Sliabh Bealgadain in Co. Galway.

Dún Binne : Gen. Dhúine Binne SF 53d
 Battlefield
 'Fort of [the] Summit' Unplaceable, but frequent in the historical tales. Vid. H s.v. Dún mbindi.

Dún Feart : Gen. Dhúine Fearta SF 8c
 A home of the Ancient Fionntan
 'Fort of the Mounds'

Dún Fraochán : Gen. Dhuine Fráochán SF 51b
 Battlefield
 'Fort of [the] Bilberries'

Dún Máighe : Gen. Dúinidh Máighe SF 45b
 Battlefield
 'Fort of [the] Plain'

Dún mBolg : Dat. Dún mBolg CO 70b
 The landing point of Muinreamhar
 'Fort of the Gaps' or 'Fort of the Sacks.' Belach Dúin Bolg, 'Pass of the fort of sacks' is the place where the men of Ireland left their food tribute to Leinster in the *Bóroma* (ed. Stokes,

Révue Celtique XIII [1892], pp. 66-7, § 67) ; the place thus called is now unknown. There is another such a place in H, found in the deanery of Ocurbliethan, diocese of Cork.

Dúrlus : Acc. Dúrlus CO 76d
Place where the Irish submit to the invader Acall
'Stronghold,' Thurles

Durmhagh : Dat. Durmagh CC 3d
A battle in which Caoilte slew an hundred
Durrow, King's Co.

Eabha : Acc. Eabha SCA 39d, SCP 42d
Site where a boar was killed by Bran
'Aspens' or the name 'Eve'. H lists a large number of places, among which the sea-plain near Benbulbin (Co. Sligo), a mountain with associations of the Fenian hunt that is mentioned 3 times in *DF*, stands as the most likely place intended by the author.

Eadaill : Acc. an Eadaille CO 42b
Italy

Eamhain : Dat. Eamhoin CO 91a ; Gen. na hEamhna CO 61b
'Macha's Twins,' Emhain Macha, now Navan Fort, Co. Armagh, the royal seat of Ulster

Eas Ruaidh : Dat. Eas Rúaidh SCA 13a, SCP 12a
The place whence the Fenians go in SC
Also in *DF* lay XXIV q. 80, where a serpent is slain there. 6 citations in S ; 10 others outside of SC in AS
'The Falls of Ruadh,' Assaroe (on the Erne)

Easpainne : Gen. Easpainne SF 23d
Dubhthach son of Dáire is high king of E., SF 23
Spain

Éigipte : Gen. Éigipte SF 22d
Mothla son of Méilge is high king of E., SF 22
Egypt

Éire (older Ériu) : Nom. Éire CO 111a ; Gen. Eireann CC 13b, 19d, 22d, 48d, SF 59d, Éireann CC 16d, 62d, SF 1d, Eiriond CO 77a, Éirionn CO 76c, 79d, 84b, Éreann SCP 12b ; Dat. Eirinn SF 55b, CO 58b, 66d, 78c, Acc. Eirinn SCA 114c, Éirinn SCP 118c (these last two possibly a dat. following the verb of blessing, a Latinism. The form Éirinn is also well-attested as an acc. in *DIL*.)
Erin

Eisi : Gen. Eisi SF 48c
Battlefield
'Troops'?

Fál : Gen. Fail SCP 88a, Fáil CC 17a, 18c, 25a, 39a, SCA 83a, SF 11a
Inisfail, a poetic name for Ireland

Fiodh dhá Bhán : Dat. fFiodh dha Bhan CC 3c
Place where Caoilte slew an hundred
'Wood of the Two Pastures'

Fionn-abhair : Gen. Fionnabhrach SCA 40d, SCP 46d
Site where a boar was killed by Bran

2 other occurrences in AS

'White Marsh' There are 23 places of this name in H.

Fionn-charn : Gen. Finnchairn SCA 40d, Fionnchairn SCP 46d

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

'White Cairn' (but one must also keep in mind Fionn himself) There are a number of such places. One of the examples in H is on Sliabh Fuaid, which is another important Fenian hunting ground that appears in the lay.

Fionntráigh : Gen. Fionntrágha CC 4b, SF 46a

The battle of Ventry, a well-known invader-tale, mentioned 4 times in AS but not in S. The surviving text of the tale is Early Modern, but there is evidence that the story is based on older tradition

'White Strand,' Ventry, usually associated with the village of that name in Kerry, 3m west of Dingle

Fir Dhomhna : gen. pl. Fhear Domhna CO 100d

Professor Gillies has described this term as 'A fanciful or feckless confection based on Fir Dhomhnann (vague Brittonic associations) and *domhna* / *doimhne*,' depth(s) (i.e. 'Men of the Deep'). The *fir Dhomhnann* are most notable as the stock whence Fear Diadh in the *Táin*. Mac Neill read it as 'a feigned man' (i.e. 'a minor'), but did not have an adequate reason for ignoring that the term is clearly plural. Murphy ignored it altogether and omitted it from the indices and notes. The term, regardless of which etymology obtains, is clearly fanciful.

Fir Menía : Gen. pl. fFear Menía SF 32d, 33b

The SF was owned by the kings until Manannán takes it, SF 32-33

Murphy's index backs Mac Neill's parenthetical suggestion 'Fir Menia (Armenia?)' (*DF* I, p. 137). His evidence is a single instance of *Fermenía* that appears in *The Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 1295, in a list of Near Eastern battles. There, it appears that it is simply a case of inorganic *f*, rather than a re-interpretation of the name. More recently, P. Considine's article 'Irish Versions of the Abgar Legend' (*Celtica* 10 [1972], pp. 237-57), has printed Middle Gaelic texts, roughly contemporary with the language of the lay, of Biblical apocrypha in which Armenia appears frequently. Armenia is translated into Gaelic from Latin as (*tír*) *Arménia*, *Arménica*, and *Arménie* in numerous MSS. No other forms are found in any of the texts he examines. If Armenia is intended in this lay, then it remains clearly as unreal as the India, Egypt, Scythia, and other distant lands of Irish romances. It may be headed in the direction of 'places' like *Tír Fo Thuinn*, 'Underwater-land.' To re-interpret Armenia as 'The Men of Menia' is not an unlikely corruption, but not in keeping with the general learned flavour of the lay.

Formaol : Dat. Formaóil CC 36d

Used as an epithet of Fionn. 8 occurrences in *DF*; 2 in S; 8 in AS. Often Formaol na fFian. 'Bare' Limerick, Co. Wexford (H)

Frainge : Acc. fFrainge CO 57b

France

Fuire : Gen. Fuire SCA 41c

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

A Fuire is given in H at Wheery, King's Co., but it is not certain whether there is a connexion. The chief aid of Wheery is to reconstruct the nominative.

Gabhair : Gen. Gáphra SF 47d

The Gowra, a tributary of the Boyne in Meath near Tara where the final battle of the *fiana* was. *Cath Gabhra* is mentioned twice in S, 4 times in AS. The battle of Gabhair is a frequent subject of lays, cf. *DF* lay XXXIX, *Tr. Oss. Soc.* I, and the Scottish ballads printed in Anja Gunderloch, *The Cath Gabhra family of ballads : A study in textual relationships*

(Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1997).

'Spear,' 'Horse,' 'Goats' and 'Frenzy' are among the words *gabhair*, but none is the obvious meaning of the toponym.

Gaoidhil : Dat. pl. Gaoídhealuibh SCA 114b, SCP 118b
The Gaedhil, Gaels

Gaiseitreaigh : Gen. pl. na nGaiseitreach CO 52d
Unknown

Gall : Dat. pl. Gallaibh CC 55b
As a general term, 'foreigners,' but most often reserved for the Lochlannaigh (and later the English), the more specific idea being of foreigners in Erin.

Gleann Deichit : Dat. Gliond Deichit SCA 61d
The *sídh* that the hunt enters is above this glen. Equivalent to **Gleann Deirg-dheis** in P.

Gleann Deirg-dheis : Dat. Gleann Deirccdhais SCP 63d
The *sídh* that the hunt enters is above this glen. Equivalent to **Gleann Deichit** in A.

Gleann Marc : Gen. Glinne Marc CC 11a
Associated with the hag Iris
'Glen of Steeds'

Gleann Teichidh : Dat. Gleann Teichidh SCP 49b
Point along the chase. A has **Sliabh Teithid** in the equivalent quatrain. Also note **Gleann Deichit** above as another possible duplicate.
'Glen of the Chase'

Gréagaigh : Nom. Greagaigh CO 21a ; Gen. Grégach 40b ; Gen pl. na nGreagach 36c
The Greeks

Gréig : Gen. Gréag CO 35a, 38c, Gréig CO 22a, na Gréigi ; Acc. Gréig CO 20c
Hercules returns there with Laimheadhón's wife, CO 20.
Greece. The text implies that **Traoi** (Troy) is in Greece, which is not true in a Classical sense, although it is a perfectly understandable usage for a mediæval author who would equate Greece with the Greek country of the time, i.e. the Byzantine Empire.

Íle : Gen. Íle SF 53b
A battle is fought on I.
The island of Islay, confirmed by use of the name in the same couplet as Kintyre.

Inbhear Bádhna : Gen. Inbhir Bádhna SF 50b
Battlefield

Inbhear Buille : Gen. Inbhir Buille SF 54c
Battlefield
'Estuary of the Blows'

Inbhear Dubh-ghlas : Gen. Inbhir Dubhghlaisi SF 44b
Battlefield
Cited in S, l. 2655, and twice in AS
'Dark Grey Estuary.' H thinks that it is 'probably the estuary of river Douglas, midway between Blackrock and Passage, Co. Cork.'

Inbhear Mhuaidhe : Dat. Inbhear Mhúaidhe CC 6b
Place where Caoilte's sword was found

'Estuary of the Mists,' placed by H at Killala Bay in Co. Mayo.

Inis Gaibíel : Gen. Innse Gaibíel SF 52d
 Site of a battle
 'Isle of [the] Sea Strait'

Inis Tuir : Dat. hInis Tuir CO 49b, 50c
 A dwelling-place of Níul
 'Isle of Heroes'

Laighean : Gen. pl. Laighean SCA 18a, SF 40b, Laighen SCP 23a ; Dat. pl. Láighnibh SF 56a
 Hunt of Leinster given Oisín, SCA 18, SCP 23
 Leinster, the Leinstermen

Leamh-choll : Gen. Leamhchoille SCP 43c
 SCA 40c,d is an entirely different couplet, and the place is not found in that recension
 A boar is killed by Bran in the meadow of Leamhcholl
 'Elm-Wood' located by H as Lowhill, Queen's Co.

Líathdruim : Dat. Líatruim SCP 13d, Líeathdruim SCA 14d
 Home of the Fenian warrior Lughaidh
 Leitrim

Life : Dat. Liffe SF 40b
 proximity to Cnucha SF 40
 The River Liffey

Lochlann : Gen. Lochlann CB 12b, 52b ; Dat. Lochluinn CO 91b, 93d ; Dat. pl. Lochlandaibh CO 96b
 Scandinavia or Norway, but often with magical overtones and associated with invaders.

Loch Uipheir : Dat. Loch Uipheir SCP 45d
 A boar was killed by Bran on the hill over L.U.

Luachair : Gen. Lúachra SF 44
 A battlefield
 3 mentions in S, 4 in AS
 'Rush-land.' S identified it as '*Slieve Logher*, the mountain-range dividing Limerick from Kerry'; H names several, the best attested of which agrees with Stokes.

Luachair Deaghoidh : Dat. Lúachair Deaghoidh CC 8b
 Home of the warrior Liath
 3 mentions in AS
 West Cork and Kerry, the district associated with the mountain discussed above.

Luasg : Gen. Lusga SF 45a
 Battlesite
 H lists a Luasc, clearly a river, but he is unable to place it.

Magh Adhair : Gen. Moighe hAdhair SF 51a
 Battlefield
 'Plain of Frost.' According to H, a mound in Toonagh, Co. Clare associated with the inaugurations of the O'Briens of Thomond

Magh Glinne : Gen. Mhoighe Glinn SCA 40c, Muighe Glinne SCP 46c
 Site where a boar was killed by Bran

'Plain of the Glen'

Magh Maland : Gen. Moighe Mháland SF 49d

Battlefield

'Plain of the Brae.' The Machaire Connacht. Vid. H s.v. Mag aái.

Magh Tuireadh : Gen. Muighe Tuireadh SF 9d

Site of the great battle in the Mythological Cycle in which the Tuatha Dé Danann are defeated and Lugh slays Balor (vid. Elizabeth Gray, ed., *Cath Maige Tuired* [Dublin : Irish Texts Society, 1982] ; Brian Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* [Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1945]).

'Plain of Heroes,' located by H at Moytirra, Co. Sligo

Marannmhál : Gen. na Marannmhál SF 20c

Lucra is lord of Marannmhál

Identified as 'a mythical place' in Murphy's index

Meilge : Gen. Meilge SF 51c

Battlefield

There is a Meilge imlige on the Liffey in H, the only toponym recorded with this element.

Midhe : Gen. Midhe CO 75d, SCP 25b

'The three bald pates of Meath' CO 75

Meath

Móin : Gen. Monadh SF 53a

Battlefield

'Bog.' Further specification is needed, for there are 2 1/2 pp. of places beginning Móin in H and others in many other sources.

Móin Mhafaídh : Gen. Mona Mhaffaidh SF 43c

Déidgeal slain in battle of M.M.

3 mentions in AS

H has 2 places Móin mafa, neither of which is locatable

Muine : Gen. Muine SCP 44c

Site where a boar was killed by Bran

'Thicket,' a common element, with a full column of listings in H

Mumhu : Gen. pl. Mumhan SCP 26a ; Acc. pl. Mhumain SF 57b

Given epithet *mhic Con* 'of Con's son' SF 57

Mac Con is legendary king, potentially associated with Lugh. The pseudohistorical origins of the phrase are described in the tale 'Cath Maigh Mucrama' and the related texts printed in Máirín O Daly, ed., *Cath Maigh Mucrama* (London : Irish Texts Society, 1975).

Munster

Neimh : Dat. Neimh CO 88b

Heaven

Ollarbh : Gen Ollairbha SF 48a

Fathadh slain in battle of O.

Cath Ollarbh is one of the final battles of the Fenians. It is mentioned 2 other times in *DF*, twice more each in *S* & in *AS*.

Identified by Murphy, S, & H as the Larne River in Co. Antrim

Osraighe : Gen. Osraighe SCA 18b, SCP 23b

Hunt of Ossory given Oisín

Ossory

Párrthus : Acc. bPárrthus SF 62 a
Paradise

Ríogh-Choill : Gen. Ríoghchoille SCA 41a
Site where a boar was killed by Bran
'Royal Wood'

Ros Áruigh : Gen. Ruis Áruigh SCP 15, 44b
The sons of Iobhar are sent by Forann, SCP 15
Site where a boar was killed by Bran, SCP 44
The quatrains with this name are lacking in A
A variant of A *Ros na Ríogh*, which Murphy equates with the one 'on the river Boyne, near Slane.'

Ros na Ríogh : Gen. Rois na Ríogh SCA 41b
Site where a boar was killed by Bran
This place also occurs in S, l. 1462 & again in passing in AS
'Wood of the Kings,' a place near Slane (on the Boyne) according to Murphy. H raises other, less likely, possibilities in addition to Murphy's suggestion, of which the one at Clonmel, a fort of the Kings of Cashel associated with Brian Bórainmhe, is worthy of mention.

Ros Géidhe : Acc. Ro nGéide SCP 42d, Ros nGéidhe SCA 39d
The form in P is corrupt. It appears that the nasalising *n* has been written, most unusually, with an *n*-stroke over the *g*. LMR have unmetrical forms. Vid. note to SCP 42d.
Site where a boar was killed by Bran.

Sassan : Gen. pl. Saxan SF 53c
Saxons, The English

Sigear : Gen. Siccir SF 6c, Sigir SF 25d, 26d
Used in phrase *rí Sigir*, 'King of Sigear' SF 6, 25
An island (26d) obviously imagined as Northern ; its epithet in 6c is *seaca*, 'frosty'

Sionainn : Dat. Sionainn CC 5d
The River Shannon

Sliabh Cualann : Gen. Sleibhe Cúalann SCA 18b
Hunt of Sliabh Cualann given Oisín
In the context of the hunt, perhaps only a spelling variant of the following item. H found 2 mountains bearing this name : the Sugarloaf at Bray, Co. Wicklow ; and Glencullen Mountain, on the border of Co. Dublin.

Sliabh Cuillinn : Dat. Sléibh Cuillinn SCA 42c
Site where a boar was killed by Bran
The same as Sliabh gCuillinn or Guilleann, the site of another hunt in *DF* lay LXII and in *Tr. Oss. Soc. Dublin* VI, pp. 2-19. 3 mentions in AS
'Mountain of Holly,' Identified by H and Murphy as Slieve Guillion, Co. Armagh

Sliabh Dhasaigh : Dat. Slíabh Dhassaigh CO 8d
Place where Íob obtains the CO
'Violent Mount' ?

Sliabh Finn-chuill : Gen. Sléibhe Finn-chuill SF 15b
Place of the beheading of Balor SF 10 & ff.
This place is not mentioned as the site of Balor's defeat in either recension of *Cath Muighe*

Tuireadh

'Mount of White-Hazel'

Sliabh Fuaid : Gen. tSléibe Fúaid SF 45c

Battlefield

A place of frequent Fenian associations : 10 mentions in S, 8 in AS. The place is associated with an Early Modern lay of the hunt, 'Seilg Sléibhe Fuaid,' incipit 'Lá dá raibh Fionn 's a shlóighte. Cf. An Seabhac, *Laoithe*, pp. 93-110 ; *Tr. Oss. Soc. Dublin* VI, pp. 20-75. 'Mount of [the] Remnant, Vagrant, Wastrel, Witch, Outcast, &c.' The Fewes mountains, Co. Louth

Sliabh Teithidh : Acc. Sliabh Teithidh SCA 46b

Point along the chase of the SC hunt. SCP has a **Gleann Teichidh** in the equivalent quatrain 'Mount of [the] Chase'

Sliabh Tiris : Dat. Slíabh Tiris CO 7c

Ílis and Iacóbó slain on S.T.

Sliabh Uighe : Gen. Sléibhe Uighe SF 49c

Battlefield

'Loch of the Journey' (reading Uidhe). H gives several possibilities, one of which, near Limerick, is associated with S. Patrick.

Taillte (earlier -iu) : Gen. Tailltean SF 31b

Eitheór slain in Cath Tailltean

3 times in S, 5 in AS

Telltown, Co. Meath, a place associated with the high kingship

Teafa : Gen. Teaffa SF 44c

Battlefield

Murphy considers this an unusual spelling of Teathbha, 'which comprised parts of Longford and Meath'; cf. *DIL* s.v. *Tethbae* for development of the name (including the forms with *f*), confirming Murphy's identification, and H s.v. *Tethbe* for a precise description of its boundaries.

Teamhair : Gen. Teamhrach CB 19b, Dat. Teamhraigh CC 7b, 49b, 50a, CO 77b

Theamhraigh CC 22b

CB found around the neck of Conaire there, CB 19c

Tara

Tír na nDionn : Dat. Tír na nDionn SF 55c

Fionn's final departure for T. na nD.

As the phrase has been written, 'Land of Fortresses,' but it is almost certainly a corruption of (or a pun on) *Teach Duinn* 'House of Donn,' meaning the Otherworld, cf. *EIHM* p. 481-4.

Traoi : Nom. Traoi CO 26d, Traóí CO 30b, 34c ; Gen. Traóí CO 36d, na Troie CO 16d ;

Acc. Traóí CO 33a, 35d, in Traóí CO 27a, 31a, 31c, 38b, 42a.

Captured by Trost, CO 16

Rebuilt by Earcuil, CO 27, 30, 31

Troy

Troad : Gen. Threóide CO 27d

The wife of Priam is princess of mór-Th.

Troighánaigh : Gen pl. tTroighíanach ; Dat. pl. Troighfánaibh CO 36d.

The Trojans

Tuatha Dé Danann : Dat. pl. Thuathaibh Dé Dhannan SF 58d
'Peoples of the goddess Danu,' a mythical race that occupied Ireland, the 'færies'

Tulach Mhong-ruaidh : Dat. Tulaigh Mongrúaidh CC 3c
Place where Caoilte slew a hundred
'Mound of the Ruddy Brush'

Uaimh Sgainnlidhe : Gen. Sgainnlidh[e] SCA 41d
In phrase *úaimhe Sgainnlidhe*, equivalent to P *Sneachtuidhe*
Site where nine boars were killed by Bran
Read *uaimh sgainnraidhe*, 'Cave of Terror' ?

Uaimh Sneachtuidh : Gen. Sneachtuidhe SCP 44d
In phrase *uamha Sneachtuidhe* ; it is also potentially a personal name. A has Sgainnlidhe
Site of nine boars killed by Bran.
'Cave of Snow'

Uigh : Gen. Uighe SF 52c
Battlefield

Uladh : Nom. pl. Ulaidh 62d, 73a, Ultaigh SCP 25d ; Gen. pl. Uladh CO 71b, 75b, 85c ;
Dat. pl. nUltoiph SF 56d
Ulster, Ulstermen

XI : References

(a) Abbreviations

- A Killiney MS A 20, often called *Duanaire Finn*, although that is more properly a section of it
- AFM *Annals of the Four Masters*, more properly *Annala Rioghachta Éireann : Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616*, ed. John O'Donovan (Dublin : Hodges & Smith, 1856 ; reprint Dublin : Castlebourne by Éamonn de Búrca, 3rd ed., 1998).
- AS *Agallamh na Seanórach*, ed. Ní Shéaghdha (Dublin, 1942-5, 3 vols). Other editions and recensions of this text will be cited unabbreviated.
- CB 'Corr-Bholg' 'Crane-Bag' and the poem about it, which begins 'Ceisd agam ort a Cháoilte' from Killiney A 20
- CC 'Colg Chaoilte' i.e. 'Caoilte's Blade' and the poem about it, incipit 'Iss é súd colg in láoich láin' from Killiney A 20
- CO 'Cloidheamh Oscair' i.e. Oscar's Sword' and the poem about it, incipit 'A cloidhimh chléircín in chluig' from Killiney A 20
- DF The *Duanaire Finn*, i.e. the section of Killiney A 20 that contains the lays
- DF *Duanaire Finn*, the ITS edition of Killiney A 20 by Mac Neill/Murphy. Roman numerals are used to indicate volume numbers.
- DIL *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1983).
- EIHM T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, (Dublin : Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946).
- FFÉ Céitinn, Seathrúin, (Geoffrey Keating), *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ed. David Comyn and Patrick Dinneen. 4 vols. (London : Irish Texts Society, 1902-14 ; reprinted 1987 by the same with new foreword by Breandán Ó Buachalla).
- L Royal Irish Academy MS 23 L 34
- LL Leabhar Laighneach, The 'Book of Leinster'
- M Royal Irish Academy MS 24 M 2
- MG Middle Gaelic
- MS(S) Manuscript(s)
- NiS Nessa Ní Shéaghdha
- OG Old Gaelic i.e. the language of the glosses as described in Thurneysen and *DIL*
- P Royal Irish Academy MS 24 P 5
- PS The prose argument of 'Sítheal Cháoilte' from RIA 24 P 5
- R St. Patrick's College, Maynooth Renehan MS R 69
- RIA The Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
- SC 'Sítheal Chaoilte', i.e. 'Caoilte's Dipper' and the poem with that incipit
- SCA The recension of the poem 'Sítheal Cháilte' from Killiney A 20
- SCP The recension of the poem 'Sítheal Chaoilte' from RIA 24 P 5
- SF 'Sciath Fhinn,' literally 'Fionn's Shield,' and the poem about it, incipit 'Uchán a sgíeath mo ríogh réil' from Killiney A 20

(b) MS Sources

Dún Mhuire, Franciscan House of Studies, Killiney, MS E 33.17

The Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, MSS 3 C 13-4, 23 L 22, 23 L 34, 24 M 2, and 24 P 5

The Russell Library, St. Patrick's College (National University of Ireland, Maynooth), MS Renehan 69

University College Dublin Archives, Killiney MS A 20 (*Duanaire Finn*)

In search of MS material, the published catalogues of a number of institutions, including Oxford University, Cambridge University, University College Cork, The British Museum (now British Library), The National Library of Ireland, King's Inns (Dublin), Glasgow University McLagan MSS (in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* VIII [1958], pp. 177-224). The unpublished Catalogue of Gaelic MSS in the National Library of Scotland by Mr. Ronald Black has been consulted in typescript copy in the North Reading Room. MacKechnie's catalogue of the Gaelic MSS of Scotland and Pádraig de Brún's *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Treoirliosta* have also been consulted. Further use has been made of the catalogues of St. Patrick's College (Maynooth), Killiney, and The Royal Irish Academy, which have been cited *infra* and are thus listed above in the general bibliography.

(c) Bibliography

Authors' names in Mac, Mc, M', &c. have been alphabetised as though spelt as Mac. Both Mac and Ó/O' have been treated as a part of the surname and not as separate words. In the alphabetisation of titles, the article has been ignored in all languages. The publication information of all sources is given as it appears on the title page, in the language and spelling there printed.

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Further References

The research undertaken in the attempts to outline the development of the Fenian cycle involved the consultation of all of the known material of the cycle prior to the period of the lays. As there are sixty-seven such items— and all of them are noted in published lists, it has not been considered necessary to list them individually. They are listed in the following : (1) Meyer, Kuno. *Fianaigeacht*. Dublin : Royal Irish Academy, 1910, pp. xvi-xxxi. (Noted infra). (2) Murphy, Gerard. Review of *Fianaigeacht*, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* VIII (1912), p. 599. A slightly abbreviated translation of this review has been added as p. 115 to the 1993 Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies reprint of (1).

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